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THE *Shakuntalā* of Kālidāsa, prince of Sanskrit poets and dramatists, has for the last fifteen centuries been considered in India as the greatest masterpiece of Sanskrit dramatic literature, and even of Indian literature in its totality. Certain Westerners, Goethe most known among them, have echoed this praise, but a number of Western critics have made very light of the play. Let it be sufficient to recall two in modern times. Gassner, I feel, utters severe criticism when he sums the *Shakuntalā* up as follows: "Well spiced with delicate and descriptive poetry, the comedy is a delightful amalgam of all the resources of a courtly play-wright who makes artifice look natural and nature seem artifice."¹ The indictment of Keith in his classic is well-known: "The admiration of Goethe and the style of the Shakespeare of India accorded by Sir William Jones must not blind us to the narrow range imposed on Kālidāsa's interest by his unfeigned devotion to the Brahmanical creed of his time.... It was impossible for him to go beyond his narrow range."²

Literary criticism of the *Shakuntalā* has moved on two different planes. The Indian critic judges the play by the canons of Indian aesthetics, and accordingly finds it practically perfect. The Western critic often applies to the play the canons of Western poetics, and finds Kālidāsa's masterpiece very light in substance, and rather poor theatre. In his recent work on Sanskrit Drama, Wells very rightly says:

In each culture the critics justify the outlook known to them and define that technique as the best which most fully realizes the native ideals. But it is the *technique* that is clearly stated rather than the *outlook*, as the aesthetics of Aristotle or Cicero, of Bharata

in the heart of the forest. The king who, in the heat of his pursuit of the deer, had not looked around properly, says to his charioteer: "Charioteer, even without being told, I should have known that these are the precincts of a grove consecrated to penitential rites."⁶ He goes on in the following stanzas to enumerate the concrete details by which the hermitage grounds distinguish themselves from the rest of the forest:

Beneath the trees, whose hollow trunks afford
 Secure retreat to many a nestling brood
 Of parrots, scattered grains of rice lie strewn.
 Lo! here and there are seen the polished slabs
 That serve to bruise the fruit of Ingudi.
 The gentle roe-deer, taught to trust in man,
 Unstartled hear our voices. On the paths
 Appear the traces of bark-woven vests
 Borne dripping from the limpid fount of waters.
 And mark!
 Laved are the roots of trees by deep canals,
 Where glassy waters tremble in the breeze;
 The sprouting verdure of the leaves is dimmed
 By dusky wreaths of upward curling smoke
 From burnt oblations; and on new-mown lawns
 Around our car graze leisurely the fawns.

A first characteristic that emerges from this description is the peaceful friendship and harmony between all that lives. As the king says later, "Serenest peace is in this calm retreat...." This peace and harmony is further detailed in Act II:

All undisturbed the buffaloes shall sport
 In yonder pool, and with their ponderous horns
 Scatter its tranquil waters, while the deer,
 Couched here and there in groups beneath the shade
 Of spreading branches, ruminant in peace.
 And all securely shall the herd of boars
 Feed on the marshy sedge....

Shakuntalā, we will see, speaks about her favourite jasmine creeper, her pet fawn, her pet deer, and Kanva, in Act IV remarks:

Hark! Heard'st thou not the answer of the trees,
 Our sylvan sisters, warbled in the note
 Of the melodies Koil?....

or Sāgaranandin, clearly show. It is only when one system is confronted with the other that certain of the most deeply ingrained properties of each become clearly apparent.³

This "confrontation of systems" is what we want to do here in a very modest way. Taking two plays, the *Shakuntalā* and the *Tempest*, both exponents of what one may generally call poetic drama, we try to penetrate into their meaning by an analysis of their poetry of nature. We hope that this comparison then may bring to the fore "certain of the most deeply ingrained properties of each dramatic tradition."

By "nature" we understand less than Speaight in his work on Shakespeare.⁴ Nature here refers only to the living reality of the world wherein man moves. The references to nature in the *Shakuntalā* fall into three distinct categories. 1. There are a number of descriptive stanzas that depict the setting in which the action unrolls, *in casu* the hermitage. 2. A lot of nature-references are found in the description of persons and especially in the description of the heroine, Shakuntalā. 3. A few descriptive stanzas refer to a particular act or incident, not vitally connected with either the setting or the main characters.

Examples of this last category are, at the beginning of the play, the description of the antelope-in-flight, the description of the steeds-in-pursuit, the description of the flitting landscape as it appears to the king in the chariot. These descriptions are intensely evocative and polished to the extreme. Their meaning, however, does not rise beyond the purely descriptive. The same may be said about the magnificent stanza in the last act, where the king describes the earth moving up to him as he descends earthward from heaven in his chariot. This type of descriptive stanza, the meaning of which is exhausted by description and evocation of pure sensation, is very rare in the *Shakuntalā*, and those we mentioned may well be the only ones.⁵

The other two categories of nature-references are very different in that their meaning extends beyond the sensation, beyond the merely descriptive. In fact, as we will see, these nature references have only secondarily a descriptive intent, their primary purpose is symbolic.

The first four acts of the *Shakuntalā* play in the hermitage of Kanva, Shakuntalā's foster father. It is a place of solitude, nestled

The lotus with the Shaivala entwined....

*

Her ruddy lip vies with the opening bud;
Her graceful arms are as the twining stalks
And her whole form is radiant with the glow
Of youthful beauty, as the tree with bloom.

The girl is clad in bark of the trees, she has a Shirisha pendant in her ear, and lily stalks grace her wrists. And what does she do? She waters the plants, for whom she feels "sisterly love;" no wonder, because the "Keshāra-tree beckons her with its young shoots, like fingers of leaves waving in the wind." And as she bends around the Keshāra tree, the tree seems suddenly "wedded to some lovely twining creeper." Further on she attends to her pet jasmine, whom she has named "the moonlight of the grove." And as she sits silently down with the king, he sees "the fawns whose eyes, in lustre vying with her own, return her gaze of sisterly affection."

Every word in this description is in perfect harmony with the hermitage itself as described before. We are not surprised when we hear that Shakuntalā is the daughter of a nymph: the idyllic maiden in the idyllic grove. Shakuntalā, pure child of nature, in a grove that is completely humanized, not in a utilitarian way, but in a sacred, a mystic way. This description is at the same time in perfect and complete harmony with the essence of the first Act:—the "falling in love" of the king and the maiden, the first, spontaneous attraction in which Shakuntalā, child of nature, breath of spring, transforms the king, the hunter, into what one could nearly call an adolescent-in-love. Through the nature-description we have thus penetrated into the very essence of the first Act. A tableau it is, representing the falling-in-love of hero and heroine, of the king and the goddess of spring in an atmosphere of perfect harmony between man and nature.

The atmosphere and topic of Acts II and III are in continuity with those of the first Act. They represent the next phases in the process of growing love. From the spontaneous, fresh attraction of Act I the king moves to an idealizing phase, where Shakuntalā is seen as "the best of creation:

Man's all-wise Maker, wishing to create
A faultless form, whose matchless symmetry

Another aspect of the hermitage, intimately connected with the first is that nature provides for all the simple needs of the hermit-folk, and all that live in the hermitage. Stone slabs serve as seats, overhanging creepers and the shade of trees provide shelter. The hermits are clad in vests of woven bark, and lotus leaves are used as fans and as letter-paper. Sacrificial offerings consist of flowers and wild-rice. Even the bridal gifts offered to Shakuntalā by her two companions are "a beautiful garland of Keshāra flowers in a cocoa-nut box," and "unguents and perfumes made of consecrated paste and blades of sacred grass." The accent is on nature's generosity in providing all the inmates need, in an easy way, without requiring the hermit's effort or resourcefulness to wrest it all from her.

The hermitage represents obviously the place where all that live, man, beast, and plant, live in a natural harmony. The beasts of the forests are sisters and children to man, in whom they trust. The plants are cared for with love, and offer man all he needs: shade and seats to rest, vestments, food, adornments for the girls, materials for sacrifices. Everything lives in peace with everything else. Harmony and perfect equilibrium distinguish this haven from the world without. This harmony is at the same time a sacred harmony, the sacred harmony of nature, the goddess, whose life is shared by man, by beast and plant.

Such is the hermitage where the first four Acts of the play take place. Let us now project upon this background the figure of Shakuntalā, described in function of nature, as seen through the eyes of the king. The king calls the hermit girl he falls in love with "as delicate as the fresh-blown jasmine." His total description in Act I can perhaps be summarized by the very first impression of the king when he sees the girls:

How graceful they look!
In palaces such charms are rarely ours
The woodland plants outshine the garden flowers.

All the other descriptive references seem to be an elaboration of this first impression of grace, freshness, artless attractiveness:

This youthful form whose bosom's swelling charm
By the bark's knotted tissue are concealed,
Like some fair bud close folded in its sheath,
Gives not to view the blooming of its beauty.

Glistened with rare and costly ornaments.
 While, 'midst the leaves, the hand of forest nymphs,
 Vying in beauty with the opening buds,
 Presented us with sylvan offerings.

And all of nature bursts forth in a song of farewell and best wishes:

VOICES (*in the air*):

Fare thee well, journey pleasantly on amid streams
 Where the lotuses bloom, and the sun's glowing beams
 Never pierce the deep shade of the wide-spreading trees,
 While gently around thee shall sport the cool breeze;
 Then light be thy footsteps and easy thy tread,
 Beneath thee shall carpets of lilies be spread.
 Journey on to thy lord, let thy spirit be gay,
 For the smiles of all Nature shall gladden thy way.

But, on the other hand, "the whole grove also shares the anguish of parting", as Priyamvadā so eloquently says:

In sorrow for thy loss, the herd of deer
 Forget to browse; the peacock on the lawn
 Ceases its dance; the very trees around us
 Shed their pale leaves, like tears, upon the ground.

Shakuntalā farewells her pet jasmine, her pet deer, and as she walks on she turns suddenly round: "what is thus hanging on to my dress?"

It is the little fawn, thy foster child.
 Poor helpless orphan! it remembers well
 How with a mother's tenderness and love
 Thou didst protect it....

As she embraces her foster-father for the last time, Shakuntalā gives perfect expression to her feelings: "Removed from thy bosom, my beloved father, like a young tendril of the sandal tree torn from its home in the western mountain, how shall I be able to support life in a foreign soil?"

The whole Act thus becomes a perfect illustration of the bitter sweetness of the farewell of the bride to her family. The mixture of joy and anguish in Shakuntalā is perfectly reflected in nature itself.

Should far transcend Creation's choicest works,
 Did call together by his mighty will,
 And garner up in his eternal mind,
 A bright assemblage of all lovely things:
 And then, as in a picture, fashion them
 Into one perfect and ideal form.
 Such the divine, the wondrous prototype,
 Whence her fair shape was moulded into being.

And in Act IV, a fortnight later, it is fever, fire and anguish that colour their love, now grown passionate:

Sunk is her velvet cheek; her wasted bosom
 Loses its fullness; c'en her slender waist
 Grows more attenuate; her face is wan,
 Her shoulders droop;— as when the vernal blasts
 Sear the young blossoms of the Mādhavi,
 Blighting their bloom; so mournful is the change,
 Yet in its sadness, fascinating still,
 Inflicted by the mighty lord of love
 On the fair figure of the hermit's daughter.

This growing love leads to the secret Gāndharva marriage, and then comes the departure of the king. The first part of the play is over now. The first union has been consummated, the first separation following it soon.

Act V brings us then the leavetaking of Shakuntalā. The young bride leaves her home, the forest, to rejoin her husband, the king, in the palace. The maiden, the child of nature, whose whole life and personality are grown together with the idyllic surroundings of the hermitage, must break these intimate ties to grow into womanhood. In the first Act we saw Shakuntalā with sisterly love take care of flowers, shrubs, and animals. Now that she has to leave, nature, the "humanized" nature of the hermitage, comes into action.

The wood-nymphs, spirits of the forest, offer presents to the bride:

Straightway depending from a neighbouring tree
 Appeared a robe of linen tissue, pure
 And spotless as a moon-beam — mystic pledge
 Of bridal happiness; another tree
 Distilled a roseate dye wherewith to stain
 The lady's feet; and other branches near

In other words, nature now weeps and mourns with the king. The memory that brought back the love for Shakuntalā has brought back to the king the enchantment of the love he shared with her, an enchantment that meant a harmony with nature. The revival of the king's memory brings this enchantment back. But we should not forget, Shakuntalā is gone. In this act she is only a figure on the canvas that the king has painted—she is only a “bright vision,” a blissful vision, or the background of the king's “dark delusion, magic dire, black cloud of madness.” And nature is very imperfectly represented by the royal gardens, and even more imperfectly on the king's canvas: “Caturikā, the hermitage grove in the background of the picture is only half painted. Go, fetch the brush that I may finish it.”—And the king knows what he wants to paint:

I wish to see the Mālini portrayed,
Its tranquil course by banks of sand impeded
Upon the brink a pair of swans: beyond,
The hills adjacent to Himālaya,
Studded with deer; and, near the spreading shade
Of some large tree, where 'mid the branches hang
The hermits' vests of bark, a tender doe,
Rubbing its downy forehead on the horn
Of a black antelope, should be depicted.

The last Act starts with a scene so strikingly parallel to the first Act, that its symbolism is inescapable. The king in his chariot is speeding along, sees a hermitage, and stops to go and pay his respect to the great sages. We know that we have come a full circle and that the meeting with Shakuntalā is now imminent. The second union will take place inevitably. Where? In this heavenly hermitage, which is situated on “Golden Peak”, a sacred range of mountains in the Himalayas. It is the perfect hermitage, where Kāsyapa and Aditi his wife live in calm seclusion. The sacred grove of Kāsyapa “boasts as its ornaments one of the five trees of heaven.” The king is enraptured: “This sacred retreat is more delightful than heaven itself. I could almost fancy myself bathing in a pool of nectar.

I am filled with awe and wonder as I gaze
In such a place as this do saints of earth
Long to complete their acts of penance, here,
Beneath the shade of everlasting trees,

Nature rejoices and weeps with Shakuntalā—"and now that she is gone, the sacred grove will be a desert without Shakuntalā," say the two companions. And what will Shakuntalā be without the hermitage? The fifth Act answers that question.

We are now within the palace, and that is where the whole Act plays: within the walls of a palace hall. Nature is banished outside its walls, and this is where Dushyanta is primarily the king. Shakuntalā is completely out of her element, and finds it impossible to make the king recall the time when he was a lover, to make him recognize in her the girl he fell in love with. Within these walls she sounds pathetic when she tries to call up the tender scene with the fawn. And to the king this sounds like "falsehood, expressed in honeyed words." Nature is banished in this Act. Shakuntalā, helpless within the walls of the castle, is not recognised, is repudiated. And as she leaves the palace, she is borne up to heaven by "a shining apparition, descended from the sky." Where did this happen? "Near the nymphs' pool." The divinities of nature have not forgotten the child of the woods. Mother nature has heard the cry of Shakuntalā "O divine Earth, open and receive me into thy bosom."

When, at the beginning of Act VI we find ourselves in the palace garden, and see the nymph Sānumati descending from heaven and hiding in the garden, we know immediately that things are changing. The garden and the nymph, admittedly, are not the hermitage and Shakuntalā, but they are symbolic representatives at least. And soon we have another confirmation of our feeling. The king, now that he has seen the ring and remembered Shakuntalā, is full of sorrow and remorse, and he has forbidden the celebration of the Spring festival. And a wonderful thing happens: "All the vernal plants and shrubs, and the very birds that lodge in their branches show respect to the king's order."

Yon mango-blossoms, though long since expanded,
Gather no down upon their tender crests;
The flower still lingers in the amaranth,
Imprisoned in its bud; the tuneful koil,
Though winter's chilly dews be overpast,
Suspends the liquid volume of his song
Scarce uttered in his throat; e'en Love, dis
Restores the half-drawn arrow to his quiver.

In the setting of hallowed nature the king now recognizes Shakuntalā and her "purity of soul."

Turning now to *The Tempest*, we will quickly indicate the function of nature and see if comparison can help us to understand the special character of the *Shakuntalā*. Why choose *The Tempest*? That for the closest parallel we had to look at Shakespeare's final comedies seems clear, but perhaps we may put this into sharp relief by quoting the following paragraph of Traversi's *Shakespeare, the Last Phase*:

It is simply to say that the characters and situations of Shakespeare's final comedies are more exclusively conditioned than ever by the poetic emotion, that the plays themselves are to be regarded accordingly as *expanded images*, and that these images in turn attain their full expression by moulding to their purpose the conventions of the stage.⁷

To one familiar with Sanskrit poetics this sentence necessarily reminds one of their theory of drama; the poetic emotion, the *rasa*, conditioning the whole play, the acts themselves conceived as expanded images; as tableaux rather than battlefields; and following from there, the movement away from realism and the importance of symbolism.

Among those last plays, *The Tempest* seems to offer a theme that in some ways is more parallel with that of the *Shakuntalā*: the love of the king (prince) for the hermitage (island) maiden who has known no man and lives in an idyllic world. The setting too, as we will see, offers a parallel. Tagore was perhaps the first to draw the attention to some of these elements of similarity, although he was more directly concerned with a comparison of Miranda and Shakuntalā.

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* plays wholly on the island. With an island one thinks first of all of isolation. One is away from the world, like in a hermitage. Prospero the hermit lives in a cell; Miranda has never seen anybody but Prospero and Caliban. One thinks of "simple life", where needs are few, and all supplied by generous nature. The first impression the shipwrecked ones have of the island is very important in this regard. "The air breathes upon us here most sweetly." "Here is everything advantageous to life". "How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!" Although

Transplanted from the groves of Paradise,
 May they inhale the balmy air, and need
 No other nourishment; here may they bathe
 In fountains sparkling with the golden dust
 Of lilies, here, on jewelled slabs of marble,
 In meditation rapt, may they recline;
 Here, in the presence of celestial nymphs,
 E'en passion's voice is powerless to move them.

Just as in the earthly hermitage, nature provides completely for man: the shade of trees, the balmy air as nourishment, fountains, slabs. But everything, although the same, is also transformed: the trees are everlasting, the fountains sparkle with golden dust, the slabs are jewelled and made of marble. That is how holiness transforms nature. Shakuntalā is no more viewed by the king idyllically, passionately as in Acts I, II and III. He views her with a realism that penetrates the beauty of her soul.

Alas, can this indeed be my Shakuntalā?
 Clad in the weeds of widowhood, her face
 Emaciate with fasting, her long hair
 Twined in a single braid, her whole demeanour
 Expressive of her purity of soul:
 With patient constancy she thus prolongs
 The vow to which my cruelty condemned her.

Summarizing the description of nature as indicating the setting, and as referring to Shakuntalā, the drama moves as follows. In the hermitage, place of peace and perfect harmony of all of nature, love grows between Shakuntalā, the nymph of spring, and the king, who from hunter becomes lover. In Act four, the bride leaves the hermitage in bitter sweetness, and the whole of nature weeps and rejoices with her. In the fifth Act nature is banished from the palace walls, the king is only king, and does not recognize his bride: Shakuntalā is repudiated. Act six is a half-way house. Neither nature nor Shakuntalā are back with us—but we have their substitutes and symbols. There is the artificial garden of the palace, there is the nymph Sānumati. There is also the picture of Shakuntalā in the background of the hermitage, and the bright vision of the king's dream. All of these are mere substitutes of the real Shakuntalā, we said, but at the same time symbols of the reunion to come. This symbolism is fulfilled in Act VII in the heavenly hermitage.

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blessed love. There are the magic clothes that appear upon the trees, a wardrobe worthy of a king! This magic has its counterpart in the *Shakuntalā*. The trees, the nymphs of the wood, yield bridal garments and adornments to Shakuntalā. A nymph appears invisibly (like Ariel), and Shakuntalā is carried up to heaven by a nymph, near the nymphs' pool. There is the magic of the curse and the magic of the ring of recognition. However, a closer look will show how much the magic of the *Shakuntalā* differs from the magic of *The Tempest*.

Magic, in *The Tempest*, is a power invested in a particular person. The powers of nature, in themselves indifferent and dormant, are manipulated by man: by Sycorax and Prospero. Sycorax was evil, and

Could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,
And deal in her command without her power.

Her magic bears fruit in "mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible to enter human hearing." Prospero uses his magic powers for good ends. He commands those powers of nature, those "little people":

ills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
... by whose aid,
Weak masters though ye be, I have bedinmed
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And twixt the green sea and the azured vault
Set roaring war

Prospero has the powers, and uses them for the good. And yet he wants to abjure the rough magic:

... I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.

The magic of Prospero, therefore, is only a temporary measure, not something that belongs to life itself, but something belonging to the island.

Corresponding to Sycorax and Prospero, we have Caliban and Ariel. Or, rather, it would be more exact to say that Sycorax and Prospero are the successive master of Caliban and Ariel. The

Caliban's utopia is just a dream, still it is caused by the impression the island makes upon him:

All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour—but nature should bring forth
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance
To feed my innocent people.

the island's main interpreter is no doubt Caliban:

I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;
I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough!
I prithee let me bring thee where crabs grow,
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts;
Show thee a jay's nest and instruct thee how
To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee
To clustering filberts and sometimes I'll get thee
Young seamels from the rock.

The island thus appears as a peaceful nook of nature, like Kanva's hermitage, where nature provides the simple needs of simple people. But there is a difference to be noted already. In Kanva's hermitage plants and animals live in an active harmony with man, and render each other service by this simple existence. On the island there is no doubt a generous lushness of nature, but it is to be enjoyed, loved and exploited and made useful by man's inventive, active interference. But there is more to the island than to be a provider for the unsophisticated:

... the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again, and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.

The isle is full of magic. Not only magic possibilities one dreams of but actual magic that appears. The magic banquet appears and disappears, brought on by "several strange shapes." There is the place where Iris, Ceres, and Juno sing songs of fertility and

good and evil, need a moral superior power, the power of moral man, to harmonize them.

Secondly, the idyllic world of Miranda, this rustic paradise, is not a permanent place, is not really a paradise, but more of a dream. The tempest and the arrival of the shipwrecked ones shatter "the idyllic seclusion which had formerly prevailed on the island, a seclusion which was, in some sense, a continuation of that abstraction from the world which had cost Prospero his dukedom."⁹ The idyll is not meant to continue. Its virtues must come to maturity, and nature must be absorbed into civilization. Marriage and the kingdom await Miranda and Ferdinand. And Prospero breaks his staff, and buries his books.

We can now go back to the *Shakuntalā*, and ask two questions suggested by our study of *The Tempest*.

What is the real meaning of the idyllic hermitage we visit in the first four Acts? There is a simple life, where nature supplies the simple needs of simple people; where magic can supply what is abundant; where man and beast and plant live in a perfect harmony. This harmony however, is not a conquered one. It is not a harmony imposed by the king of nature, man, upon the animal and elemental forces, as we saw it in *The Tempest*. It is a harmony here that results from the nature of all that exists, from the participation of all in the self same life. The creepers, the deer, the nymphs, the gods, Shakuntalā, they all belong to the family of nature. And what makes the hermitage idyllic is just the fact that its inhabitants live up to this fundamental reality. The idyllic harmony reflects the harmony within man. While Caliban is "earth recalcitrant"—not so in the *Shakuntalā*. Does not Shakuntalā call her "O divine earth?" And one is not allowed to forget the solemn opening of the play:

Īśa preserve you! he who is revealed
In these eight forms by man perceptible
Water, of all creation's work the first;
The fire that bears on high the sacrifice
Presented with solemnity to heaven;
The Priest, the holy offerer of gifts;
The Sun and Moon, those two majestic orbs,
Eternal Marshallers of day and night;
The subtle ether, vehicle of sound,

owers of nature are dormant, are personified in Caliban and Ariel, and Sycorax and Prospero exert magic dominion over them, for good, or for evil. What, then, do Caliban and Ariel symbolize?

Good, or for evil. What, then, do Caliban and Ariel symbolize?

Caliban has in himself an earthy poetry that is primarily concerned with the forces of nature in their simplicity. Caliban, says Traversi, half man and half beast, and represents the real state of nature.⁸ He presents the "animal" part of man, the part of man and nature that is recalcitrant to reason and grace:

What, ho! slave! Caliban!
Thou earth, thou! speak.

The part in man and nature, in other words, that needs to be controlled, restrained, subjected to a purpose stronger, more potent than itself: "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature Nurture can never stick." Ariel also represents nature, the forces dormant. But not so earthy, more elemental and refined:

... I come
To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
On the curl'd clouds, to thy strong bidding task
Ariel and all his quality.

Ariel is close to the elements, the air, the water, the fire, the purer elements that proffer lightness and greater plasticity to the spirit than the heavy earth. Ariel is the spiritual potential of nature, potential music. He is the music that pervades the isle.

Such is the isle. That is where *The Tempest* plays. But there is more to *The Tempest* than the island. There are Naples and Milan, the real world. Between them is the expanse of the sea. It is only from this wider perspective that one can judge the idyllic quality

of Prospero's paradise. We want to stress particularly two related aspects of it.

First of all, the harmony, the peace, the subjection of earth and elements, of Caliban and Ariel is something achieved by man, by Prospero. It is the result of a struggle: Prospero had to defeat Sycorax to build his paradise. The natural forces, therefore, in themselves ineffectual, in themselves morally ambivalent, open to

The world of the palace (Acts V and VI) is wedged between the two hermitages, the earthly one (Acts I-IV) and the heavenly one (Act VII). Does this suggest that in fact the palace-life is the ephemeral dream, and that solid reality is found in the hermitage? We do not think so, because, when we denote the sequence of the *Shakuntalā* as hermitage-palace-hermitage, we are presenting an incomplete dialectic. We are forgetting that at the end of the play, Kāsyapa says to Dushyanta: "And now, my dear son, take thy consort and thy child, re-ascend the car of Indra, and return to thy imperial capital. And accept my blessing":

For countless ages may the god of gods,
Lord of the atmosphere, by copious showers,
Secure abundant harvest to thy subjects;
And thou by frequent offerings preserve
The Thunderer's friendship! Thus, by interchange
Of kindly actions may you both confer
Unnumbered benefits on earth and heaven!

And there is more. At the time that Shakuntalā was leaving the hermitage, she asked her foster father, "Dear father, when shall I ever see this hallowed grove again?" He answered:

I will tell thee listen,
When thou hast passed a long and blissful life
As king Dushyanta's queen, and jointly shared
With all the earth his ever-watchful care;
And hast beheld thine own heroic son,
Matchless in arms, united to a spouse
In happy wedlock; when his aged sire,
Thy faithful husband, hath to him resigned
The helm of state; then, weary of the world,
Together with Dushyanta thou shalt seek
The calm seclusion of thy former home:—
There amid holy scenes to be at peace,
Till thy pure spirit gains its last release.

Now we have completed the sequence we spoke about. We end up not with a dialectic triad, but with an alternating sequence: Hermitage-palace-hermitage-palace-hermitage.

The time has come now to suggest some general conclusion as to the aesthetic concept underlying these two plays. In both plays there is a compenetration of drama and poetry, and in such a way

Diffused throughout the boundless universe
 The Earth, by sages called 'The place of birth
 Of all material essences and things';
 And air, which giveth life to all that breathe.

The elements and the earth, are manifestations of the Lord himself, visible forms of him. Caliban and Ariel, in Indian terms, would be, I think, personified symbols of *sattva* and *tamas*.

According to the almost universally accepted cosmology of the *śāṅkhya*, nature is constituted of three *guṇas*, or qualities, of which all that exists (except pure spirit) is a combination. *Sattva* is the quality of lightness, translucency and plasticity, best expressed in the subtlest of the elements, ether, which is the vehicle of sound. This could be symbolized by Ariel. *Tamas* is the quality of darkness, heaviness, resistance, best expressed by the grossest of the elements, earth. This could be symbolized by Caliban.¹⁰ The ethereal Ariel, the spirit of music, potential light, is thus opposed to the earthy Caliban, close to beast and plant, drawing his sap from the earth. But in the Indian vision both these, *sattva* and *tamas* are manifestations of the Lord. Their co-existence is divine, their harmony is natural and essential.

The heavenly hermitage of the last act again reflects this natural harmony of all creation, but now on a more paradisaical scale. The paradisaical quality is not one imposed by the moral and magical agency of the saints, but it is the faithful reflection of the more heavenly spirituality of those that dwell there. Again the harmony is not one imposed by moral and magical conquest, and maintained on a precarious balance, but one that is the simple manifestation of the eternal self-expression of the Lord.

Our second question is this: How is this idyllic hermitage related to the world of civilization, to the world of palaces and kingships? In *The Tempest* the idyll of the island is a dreamworld conjured up between two states of civilization. The first Milan-Naples was full of corruption, the second is mature and redeemed. Prospero, banished from the first, builds on the island of dreams the second where Miranda and Ferdinand will found the fuller life, that integrates nature and grace.

The general scheme of the *Shakuntalā* is totally different. We do not have here the idyll wedged in between the two states of the civilized world, fallen and redeemed. In fact, we see the opposite:

And, at the end, everybody leaves the island for ever, never to return. A dreamworld of passage it is, the isle; the *real* lies ahead in "a brave new world."

The hermitage, on the other hand, is not a dream, but solid reality. The ornaments and bridal garments brought forth by the trees do not disappear, but clothe and adorn the bride. The nymphs, the gods, do not vanish into thin air, they have the same reality as man and beast. The hermitage is not a world-in-between, a dream episode. It is reality that is and was, and will be waiting for the king and queen when they retire from the palace.

And so we come to the relation between the idyll and the world. In *The Tempest*, the island episode is wedged between two states of civilization: Milan-Naples were corrupt, and at the end they are restored, redeemed. True, the conflict itself, the disintegration of the political and moral order, is mostly relegated to the past in this particular play. But the whole play looks from the island back towards the corruption and forward to the redemption. "And all of us found ourselves when no man was his own." The element of conflict is constantly present in the play, in the presence of the tempest itself, in the activity, futile though we know it is, of the plotters, in the abortive and comically pathetic rebellion of Caliban. The tempest, says Speaight very rightly, is only "directly represented in a single scene, but its reverberations never completely die away."¹¹ Conflict and crisis, the progress from corruption to redemption lie so much at the heart of the play that any harmony that is established is essentially a precarious one. "Prospero, indeed, never forgets the sombre background of these idyllic scenes."¹²

The relationship between idyll and world is quite different in the *Shakuntalā*. We saw how the complete sequence should be expressed as hermitage-palace-hermitage-palace-hermitage. This is quite a different scheme from the dialectical triad of *The Tempest*, it is a rhythmic movement. The life of the lovers moves rhythmically between hermitage and palace. No dialectic here, reality-dream-reality, but rhythm in which all phases are equally much reality.¹³ This rhythm is at the very basis of the *Shakuntalā*, as it is at the basis of the traditional Indian conception of life. The rhythm of the seasons, the rhythm of rebirth, the rhythm of creation and dissolution dominate the outlook of traditional India. On that background we see the rhythm of the love of Dushyanta and Shakuntalā.

that the action evolves in function of the poetic vision. Both plays proceed along the line of successive expanded images. The setting therefore plays an all-important role, and the role of nature is of prime importance, pervading the whole action and continuously symbolizing its meaning. We find in both plays this striking and persistent contrast of the idyll and the world, the island and Milan-Naples, the hermitage and the palace. In both plays this contrast is at the centre of the drama, and the idyll has a definite connection with nature in its opposition to the ordinary world of reality. These are no doubt striking similarities, revealing how in these plays the two dramatists approached playwriting in a similar way, to the point of a parallel use of poetry and a comparable approach to the symbolism of nature.

However, our conclusion is that this similarity does not go any further than form and technique. Important differences appear when we look more closely at the theme, or, perhaps better, the outlook that is revealed through that technique.

The harmony of the isle of Prospero is Prospero-made, is man-made. Prospero's moral, redeeming influence had to wrest the isle from Sycorax, and impose itself on a nature intrinsically ambivalent. Prospero had to subdue Caliban, to free and subdue Ariel, who hankers after his total freedom, and he has to keep them continuously in subjection.

The harmony of the hermitage is not man-made but innate. It is a harmony based upon the participation in the selfsame life by man, beast and plant. Nature does have its gross and subtle aspects, its earth and ether, its *sattva* and *tamas*, but all are expressions of the same Lord. Nature does not harbor an ambivalence that must be set right by man.

In final instance, Prospero's island is a *dreamworld*. Although the whole play is enacted there, it has no lasting reality. The banquet disappears as suddenly as it appears. The magic clothes do the same. The masque with Iris, Ceres, and Juno, is just a play. Prospero refers to "the baseless fabric of this vision," and he says that,

These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air

Prospero breaks his staff and buries his books at the end of the play

apart from being acquainted with the greatest creative mind in English it also meant a tacit admission into the civilised tradition of Rhetoric and of Speech. A casual glance through extracts from the *Calcutta Gazette* will show us how it was customary to include recitations from Shakespeare on all public occasions. If we look at the entry for March 15, 1830 we find an account of a 'Prize distribution' ceremony arranged in the house of Baboo Gopee Mohan Deb, "conducted by the zealous and indefatigable Secretaries of the Society Baboo Radhakant Deb and Mr. Hare." These occasions were marked with stage presentations mostly in the nature of recitations (don't we all have excruciating memories of similar occasions from our own schooldays) and our Gazetteer on this occasion records a whole series of them among which there are three set pieces from Shakespeare and one whole scene from *Julius Caesar*. The speeches are: "Brutus on the death of Caesar", "Henry the Fourth's Soliloquy on Sleep", "Hamlet's Soliloquy on Life and Death." The Gazetteer's comment on the performance of the boys is worth noting: "The whole of these were delivered with good emphasis and discretion, and in some instances, with a correctness of enunciation, energy of manner and gracefulness of deportment *which would have done credit to any School in England.*"¹ (Italics mine). On February 19, 1829 the Gazetteer records with an even greater enthusiasm the occasion of the prize distribution ceremony in Anglo Indian College: Shakespeare of course looms prominently among the list of recitations. There is once again Brutus' speech on the death of Caesar, but there is also a short piece between Brutus and Cassius, the role of Brutus being played by Ramtonoo Lahiri, whose name has been commemorated by Sibnath Sastri as a name which stands for the entire social milieu of Bengal. The programme also included three scenes from the first Act of *Hamlet*, Horatio being played by Krisna Mohan Banerji and the Ghost by Amrit Lal Mitra. Thus we see Young Bengal welcoming Shakespeare into the Bengali sensibility and the Gazetteer remarks with a smug satisfaction: "The respectable Natives of Calcutta now view the advantages of European education in their true light and send their children with entire confidence to reap the benefits of an Institution which they feel offers palpable means for making them wiser and better members of society."²

So, in the beginning Shakespeare was used as an inducement for

**NOTE ON BENGALI TRANSLATIONS OF
SHAKESPEARE : 1850-1900**

SHAKESPEARIAN drama was one of the challenges that Bengali literary sensibilities faced in the nineteenth century. It was, as is generally known, the time when the more articulate section of the Bengali people were making all kinds of adjustments in order to meet the demands created by their new acquaintance with the superior literary achievements of the English. Shakespearian drama must have been a double challenge to the Bengalis of the nineteenth century: on the one hand, to the newly emerging conscious artistry of the Bengali poets and prose writers the many sided richness of Shakespeare's use of language must have seemed like an area where they could try their own strength; on the other hand, to the new enthusiasts of the theatre, who were interested in making the theatre a more adequate vehicle of human experiences, the myriad-sided Shakespeare must have offered a haven as well as an acting model. The latter half of the nineteenth century, therefore, found in Bengali translations of Shakespeare's plays. This discussion is not meant to be a classroom dissection of the Bengali translations showing where they slipped from the original and taking them to task for it: it is rather an attempt to catch a glimpse of the late nineteenth century literary scene, gauging the responses of the artists of the time to the newly emerging responsibilities towards their own literature and the indigenous theatre, with Shakespeare as our measuring rod.

There is hardly any doubt that Shakespeare first came into Bengal as an important part of the new education—young Bengalis were coming into the imported British culture with all the zeal of converts. Reciting Shakespeare was a major part of this education:

drama Lebedeff, the Russian pioneer in Bengali theatre, had commented that the Bengali audience seemed to prefer "mimicry and drollery to plain grave solid sense, however purely expressed."⁵

The Bengali stage was still feeding upon entertainments got up from Bharatchandra's Bidyasundar: in fact there was a dearth of dignified drama in the vernacular. So far as this initial vacuum was concerned there was a certain similarity between the situation here and the one in Elizabethan England before Marlowe, Shakespeare and others had appeared on the scene. In Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* the contemporary English Drama is mentioned disapprovingly. We see in the nineteenth century Bengal the same anxiety about improving the standard of native drama, an eclecticism bordering on catholicity regarding the choice of sources which might be utilised to fill up the vacuum. To Shakespeare they turned mostly for the abiding dignity of his drama. I have already suggested that there was a tremendous premium upon Shakespeare in the new system of education and the image of the enduring quality of his drama had impressed itself upon the sensibility of the Bengalis. Not merely for drama but for the language in general the young enthusiasts must have felt that adaptations from Shakespeare were a very effective way of reviving the Bengali drama from the morass of conventions into which it had fallen.

Some motive of this sort must have been present in the mind of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar when he adapted one of the earliest of Shakespeare's comedies, *The Comedy of Errors*, into a delightful prose fiction, calling it *Bhrāntibilās*. Pioneering in every sense of the term, Vidyasagar's contributions towards the advancement of the Bengali language can hardly be exaggerated. Therefore, his adaptation of Shakespeare in *Bhrāntibilās* deserves close attention. Moreover, his choice of this play has an intrinsic interest—because in choosing *The Comedy of Errors* Vidyasagar chooses not only Shakespeare, but via Shakespeare Plautus the great writer of Latin comedies. Shakespeare's play is an adaptation of Plautus' *Menacchmi*, and Vidyasagar's *Bhrāntibilās* is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*: so it is the case of one nascent humanism harking back to another, which had in its turn been nourished by the classical products of the Greco-Roman civilisation.

While Shakespeare's adaptation of Plautus shows some incorporation of new ideas derived from Pauline conceptions of the social

imbibing a better culture. What the Latin models, specially Seneca did for sixteenth century England Shakespeare did for nineteenth century Bengal: he provided a striking model which had, in its own way, perfected the art of articulating certain modes of human experience and which could be fruitfully imitated to bring a richness into the general process of resurgence.

The new spirit of self-discovery that accompanied this resurgence has, rather loosely, been termed the Bengal Renaissance. I shall have occasion later on to comment on this widely accepted epithet, but for the time being I shall simply note the enthusiasm with which various new modes were tried out during this particular period: it was a time when there was a great deal of conscious effort on everybody's part on the one hand to imbibe wonders of the European culture that had come with the conquerors, on the other to bring the native tradition of culture up to date so that its standards might match the superiority of the new culture.

A situation like this necessarily calls for translations; specially the singular achievements of the British in the realm of literature necessarily invited imitation. Shakespeare was the most obvious aim for many different reasons. A very important one I have already indicated—even as the new generation of Bengalis grew up, who were being groomed in all the finesse imparted by an English education, Shakespeare was being firmly entrenched in their sensibility. He represented the highwatermark of human articulateness, a veritable model for all cultures aspiring to superiority. In fact, no cultured nation could do without a civilised theatre: understandably therefore, nineteenth century Bengal saw a lot of activity towards the betterment of the Bengali theatre. A New Drama movement was on and it tried to tap all possible literary sources.

A considerable amount of spadework has been done by scholars⁸ in different directions to show us the beginnings of the Bengali stage. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, after the notable attempts of Lebedeff, there were many attempts by the English settlers to build up a lively stage and we gather that the great actor Garrick, who was considered to be the greatest living interpreter of Shakespeare of the time, thought it worth while to send "one Mr. Messinck to work here as the Stage Manager and this might be taken as a bond strengthening the tie of the Calcutta Stage with the tradition of London."⁹ But looking at the indigenous taste for

Vidyasagar is satisfied with a straightforward descriptive prose, slightly heightened, but quite free from any artistic contortions. Thus,

Aegeon: A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd
Before the always-wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm; (I. i. ll. 63-5)

The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the boat then sinking ripe to us; (ll. 77-8)

মলয়পুর হইতে যোজনমাত্র গমন করিয়াছি, এমন সময়ে অকস্মাৎ গগনমণ্ডল
নিবিড় ঘনঘটায় আচ্ছন্ন হইল; প্রবলবেগে প্রচণ্ড বাত্যা বহিতে লাগিল; সমুদ্র
উত্তাল তরঙ্গমালায় আনোলিত হইয়া উঠিল, আমরা জীবনের আশা বিসর্জন
দিয়া প্রতিক্রমেই মৃত্যুপ্রতীক্ষা করিতে লাগিলাম।... কিয়ৎক্ষণ পরে অর্ধবপোত
মগ্নপ্রায় হইল। নাবিকেরা পোতবন্ধ বিষয়ে সম্পূর্ণ হতাশাস হইয়া আত্মরক্ষার
চেষ্টা দেখিতে লাগিল এবং অর্ধবপোতে যে কয়খানি ক্ষুদ্র তরী ছিল, তাহাতে
আরোহণপূর্বক প্রস্থান করিল।⁷

[We had sailed but a mile from Malaypur when the sky was suddenly overcast with dark clouds; a strong wind started blowing fiercely; the sea grew violent with waves. We gave up hope of our lives and waited for death to come any moment After some time our ship was nearly sunk. The sailors despaired of ever saving the ship and looked for ways of saving themselves. They lowered all the small boats on the ship, got into them and fled.]

While Vidyasagar's prose is remarkable for its picturesque vigour it is quite clear that the language is of a different genre from that of Shakespeare although it is so largely derived from it. Shakespeare's language is a process of capturing the dynamic into a language which had just been opening into new prospects of expressiveness. Vidyasagar with an astuteness that is typical of him realised that the potentiality of Shakespeare for the purposes of English drama lay in the direction of narrative. Hence he utilised the delightful narrative interest of a comedy which is otherwise rather neglected.

In fact Vidyasagar's use of Shakespeare points to a more fundamental aspect of Shakespeare translations in general in Bengali: the story element seems to have appealed most to these early adapters of Shakespeare. The nineteenth century in Bengal was a time of vigorous fiction writing when all kinds of Romances and extravagant stories were set afloat for the consumption of the newly educated

duties of women, Vidyasagar's adaptation is singularly free from any such experiments with new ideas. His main interest, quite obviously, is the narrative. He follows the drift of the story of the *Comedy of Errors* with the utmost care, making it quite clear that his concern is with the narrative and not the dramatic aspect of the original play. Whereas Shakespeare makes use of English verse for the purposes of drama with the zeal of a neophyte, making all kinds of experiments with the language to test its flexibility, Vidyasagar is mainly interested in producing an easy flow for the narrative. Take, for instance, Aegeon describing the circumstances of his early life leading up to the shipwreck: Shakespeare's early, immature style cannot resist the temptation of introducing a number of tricks with the language. Thus talking of Aegeon's marriage with Aemilia, Shakespeare twists the language, as he had himself once remarked, like a 'chevril glove':

In Syracuse was I born and wed
Unto a woman, happy but for me
And by me, had not our hap been bad. (I. i. ll. 37-9)

This terse reporting is expanded by Vidyasagar in leisurely prose, appropriate for narrative fiction:

আমি হেমকুট নগরে জন্মগ্রহণ করি। যৌবনকাল উপস্থিত হইলে লাবণ্যময়ী নাম্নী এক স্ত্রীপা রমণীর পাণিগ্রহণ করিলাম। লাবণ্যময়ী যেমন সংকুলোৎপন্ন, তেমনিই সদৃশসম্পন্ন ছিলেন। উভয়ের সহবাসে উভয়েই পরম সুখে কাল হরণ করিতে লাগিলাম। মলয়পুরে আমার বহু বিস্তৃত বাণিজ্য ব্যবসায় ছিল, তদ্বারা বহু অর্থাগম হইতে লাগিল। যদি অদৃষ্ট মন্দ না হইত, অবিচ্ছিন্ন সুখসম্ভোগে সংসারষাত্রা সম্পন্ন করিতে পারিতাম।"

[I was born in the city of Hemakuta. On having attained my youth I accepted the hands of a beautiful woman in marriage. Her name was Labanyamayee. She came of a good family and was endowed with good virtues. Both of us spent our days in great happiness in each other's company. I had extensive trade in Malaypur which brought me a lot of money. If my luck had not given way, I could have continued my family life in undiminished happiness.]

r, talking about the shipwreck Aegeon alias early Shakespeare cannot let go the opportunity of a deliberate attempt at image-making while

of Macbeth and the consequent primrose way to everlasting bonfire affords magnificent story and the gusto with which the witch scenes were exploited by the Bengali translators will testify to its appeal. *The Tempest* with its magic island, its magician king, ethereal spirits and earthly monsters must have had a considerable appeal for an age which was very much attracted by an emerging note of Romantic wildness: the colloquial vigour of the Bengali renderings of the storm scene still manages to delight us.⁹ The homage to Romanticism is amply paid by the Bengalis in their degree of interest in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Having got a broad idea of the kind of interest Shakespeare may have roused in his translators, let us take a closer look at some of the actual works of translation.

Translations are a thorny problem under any circumstances; their difficulties take on a formidable proportion when it comes to poetic drama of Shakespearian vitality. The complexity of the patterns that are woven with words and action each drawing upon a tradition rich in associations seems impossible to transplant, specially to a soil as different as the Bengali theatre where the expectations from words as well as from human beings as moral agents are so widely different from those of sixteenth century England. For our purpose the differences will be illuminating: how did an age of transition in nineteenth century Bengal measure up to another which had vitality enough to produce Shakespeare and Marlowe?

The vastness of the gulf that yawned before any translator is very well indicated in the Preface to one of the earliest of these Bengali translations. Hara Chunder Ghosh, who was one of the earlier recipients of the enlightenment of English education felt an obligation to share some of the glory of the new enlightenment with his less privileged countrymen, so he decides to undertake a translation of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, calling it *Bhānumaticchittabilās*. The preface to his translation deserves to be quoted extensively:

"In presenting this piece of dramatic composition to my indulgent readers, I would observe that at the suggestion of an European friend of native education, I had originally undertaken the translation of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, a play which, though inferior in some respects to *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Lear* and *Othello*, or perhaps to the First and Second Parts of *Henry IV*, was considered the best for the purpose, for which the translation was avowedly

Bengalis. The flamboyance of Shakespeare's stories was a thing that was readily accepted in this atmosphere. In fact, curiously enough, it shows a process that is the reverse of what had happened in English in Shakespeare's time. Shakespeare had come into a vast storehouse of narratives from different sources, and he breathed drama into them to plumb the depths of human action and experiences. What these early adapters of Shakespeare did was, in a sense, to take him back to the relatively greater chaos of his narrative sources: the interest had shifted in a marked degree from what could be called in Aristotelian terminology the 'action', (the *praxis*) of Shakespeare's plays to their 'plots'⁸ (the *mythos*). There is a marked bias for the gorgeousness of Shakespeare's plots: that rather than the delicate interactions of human personalities with which Shakespeare plumbs the mysteries of existence forms the major point of interest in these translations. The reason most probably is that the time mostly favoured Romances and mythologies. Popular imagination was filled with good men and women falling into the clutches of human intrigues and then coming out of these with the help of beneficial deities. Shakespeare's plays offered plenty of scope for just the right kind of extravaganzas: banished dukes, magic islands, monsters, starry-eyed wooing lovers and star-crossed victims of circumstances and so on.

This is best seen in the frequency of the kinds of plays which are recorded to have been translated. *The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice* seem to have been the two plays most favoured by the translators, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* closely following: the catalogue published by the National Library records no less than fourteen adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice*, literal or otherwise, seven of *The Tempest*, twelve of *Macbeth* and nine of *Romeo and Juliet*. The popularity of *The Merchant of Venice* can be explained by the fact that it was the most frequently performed play in the schools. (English speaking schools in Calcutta are still addicted to it). Portia's spectacular checkmating of Shylock goes down very well on the stage and never fails to tickle the audience. Add to this the passages of sententious rhetoric that Portia utters in the courtroom scene and the purple passages of nocturnal wooing between Lorenzo and Jessica, and the vogue of the play can be partially understood, if not fully explained. The appeal of *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* is more easily accounted for. The weird destiny

heart of a difficult and intriguing age. The figure of Portia too, shines in isolation, almost another secret in a casket, in whose proud independence we see the new type of woman which Renaissance literature hailed in different forms. Harachandra Ghosh had earlier seen the need of changing all this and the 'Nātuck' that he produced used all the well-worn conventions of Sanskrit Drama together with all the expectations that had come into popular minds through entertainments like "Jātrās" which were mostly narrative-based. Then, not being satisfied with the absurd logic chopping of the comic character Launce in Shakespeare, Harachandra Ghosh adds to the 'mimicry and drollery' of the play by introducing Sadānanda and his wife Vilās to add to the erotic titillation of the plot. The most important question from our point of view is how did Harachandra tackle the problem of Shakespeare's language. We have seen the competence and discretion with which Vidyasagar had avoided the trickier of Shakespeare's linguistic ventures and had rendered the excesses of Shakespeare's early style with a simpler and expressive narrative prose. But when it comes to a lesser man like Harachandra, the failure to harness the resources of the language which was still at an experimental stage begins to tell most hopelessly: the pithy rhetoric of Portia's famous courtroom harangue, "The quality of mercy is not strain'd," for instance, has become, in the hands of Harachandra, forty plodding, repetitive lines in the traditional Payār metre:

দয়ার গুণ লক্ষপতি রায়
 দয়ার গুণের কথা বর্ণন না যায় ।
 অসীম দয়ার গুণ জগতে প্রচার
 গগন অনুর জায় সর্বত্র বিস্তার ।
 গগনাসু ক্রিতি যেন স্ফুটয়তি করে
 দয়াধর্ম সেইরূপ শুভ করে নরে ।
 দুই মতে শুভঙ্করী দয়ারে জানিবে
 দাতা গ্রহীতার সেই কল্যাণ করিবে ।

[Listen, O Lakshapati Ray, to the virtues of mercy,
 It is hardly possible to describe the virtues of mercy.
 All the world knows about the infinite graces of mercy.
 It spreads all over like the sea and the sky.
 Just as the sky and the earth soothe mankind

undertaken by me." But he goes on to say, "the plan was abandoned before I had distanced the flight of Jessica." ... The reason he gives for it is worth noting: he had been advised by 'learned friends' that such a "performance was not likely to be popular, unless the mode in which it was done were altered." But since the author's intention was to give Shakespeare as wide a native circulation as possible he "took their advice and undertook to write it in the shape of a Bengali Nāटक or Drama." He takes, he says with an obvious bias, "the plots and underplots losing no opportunity to convey to my countrymen who have no means of getting themselves acquainted with Shakespeare save through the medium of their own language, the beauty of the author's sentiments as expressed in the best passages in the play in question."¹⁰ The additions and alterations that he has introduced have all been brought in to suit the native taste.

The result has been ludicrous. The centre has been shifted from Antonio, the merchant of Venice, to Bhānumati, who is a Bengali counterpart of Portia. As the name makes amply clear, the play has been made into a kind of Romantic drama narrating the love between Bhānumati (Portia) and Chittavilās (Bassanio). Belmont and Venice have been rendered as Ujjain and Gujerat, both names redolent of narrative fiction of the past. No pains have been spared in converting the independent, glittering figure of Shakespeare's Portia into a coy heroine belonging to the Sanskrit tradition of drama. Instead of having one attendant Nerissa, Bhānumati is given a pair called Sulochanā and Sushilā, in imitation of Kalidasa's Sakuntalā, one presumes. The worst concession is made, I feel, in fitting her up with two very anxious parents: the play, after opening with the conventional 'nāndī', and an introduction by an actress, invoking spring, the season of lovers, in fact begins with Bhānumati's parents quarreling with one another. The nagging mother complains that the father is neglecting his duties, he is not taking the necessary steps for arranging the marriage of Bhānumati who has grown over-ripe for marriage. With this initial stroke the translator has rudely destroyed the focal point of Shakespeare's play: all the new glitter of commerce that marks the European Renaissance is evoked in the splendour of the argosies in Shakespeare's play and the central figure of the Merchant, isolated and melancholic, loving his friend but somehow hating himself, immediately take us to the

a form, English had never really lost the tradition of poetic drama. Even in Miracle and Morality plays we sometimes get patches of poetry which suddenly reveal unforeseen depth in the action of the play. In Bengali, however, poetry had been nearly completely usurped by lyric and narrative forms. There was no figure in Bengal before the coming of the British who could, by the longest shot, equal the talents of Bharatchandra on the one hand and the Vaishnava lyricists on the other. This peculiar nature of the Bengali heritage had been best divined by the most creative of the literary figures of nineteenth century Bengal: Michael Madhusudan Datta. His letters, which are in English, to his actor friend Keshab Chandra Ganguly are very illuminating from this point of view. Madhusudan, who was a keen student of Shakespearian drama, (he had been brought up in the great tradition of Shakespearian teaching, having been taught by no less a teacher than Richardson,) came to feel the deficiencies in the native tradition all the more keenly: "We Asiatics are of a more romantic turn of mind than our European neighbours. Look at the splendid Shakespearian Drama. If you leave out the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and perhaps one or two more, what play would deserve the name of Romantic? In the great European Drama you have the stern realities of life, lofty passion and heroism of sentiment. With us it is all softness, all romance. We forget the world of reality and dream of Fairylands. The genius of the Drama has not yet received even a moderate degree of development in this country. Ours are Dramatic poems."¹¹ In trying to infuse the vernacular poetry with some of the energy he had noticed in the poetry of Europe, Madhusudan consciously forges out Blank Verse, and his comments on it have a distinctly Renaissance-like exuberance: "Take my word for it, Blank verse will do splendidly in Bengali and that in course of time, like the modern Europeans, we too shall equal, if not surpass, our classical writers. What we want at present are men of zeal, of diligence, of energy, of enthusiasm, of liberal views to give our language a jolly lift." This, I think, is the truest possible remark about the fact of the Bengali language, specially when it was at a state of uncertainty, a state comparable to the one Shakespeare's immediate predecessors must have faced. That Madhusudan had the trials of that age in mind is made amply clear in the remark immediately following: "If we have no 'genius' among ourselves,

So mercy heals his wounds.
 Know mercy to be a double benefactress
 She does good to the giver and the receiver.]

The equally famous 'moonlight' scene of Lorenzo and Jessica has taken on an ornate baroque quality derived from the conventional poetic diction of the age just preceding:

দেখ আসি, শোভা রাশি, পৌর্ণমাসী, ধনি ।
 হের শশি, কাছে বসি, গ্রাণ শশি, মনি ॥
 স্বধাকরে, স্বধা করে, স্বর জরে, মরি ।
 অঙ্গ জরে, কর অরে, স্নিগ্ধ করে ধরি ॥
 মনোলোভা, হের শোভা, কত শোভা ধরে । etc.

[This is a hyperbolic, repetitive invitation to the lady love to watch the splendour of a moonlit night. Its profuse use of assonance makes a literal rendering into English pointless and impossible.]

These specimens, cursorily selected as they are, should be enough to suggest one very important thing about the Bengali translations of Shakespeare's plays: the stiffness of the Bengali poetic diction and versification of the time and their inability to match the nuances of Shakespeare's dramatic verse. The myriad-minded Shakespeare, whose dramatic world was 'still vex'd', like the Bermoothes of his own description, could hardly be broken into by the mythridden ornamental associations of the Bengali language of the mid nineteenth century.

This present discussion is not meant to be a polemical tirade against the inferiority of the 'native' language, compared with the language of a poet dramatist whose achievement has yet to be matched in English. That would be a fruitless, disproportionate, not to mention downright objectionable, thing to do. But this comparison is meant to be a kind of investigation into certain aspects of Bengali drama, which otherwise become very difficult to locate. Thus, for instance, at this stage of my discussion I feel justified in spelling out a certain notion about Bengali drama which I have been hinting at all along. Bengali language in the middle of the nineteenth century was in no fit state to be a vehicle for poetic drama of any sort. For one thing, there had not been any long standing tradition of drama written in poetry of some standard. This, on the other hand, is an advantage that Shakespeare had. In however varying and unequal

প্রথম দৃষ্টান্ত প্রদর্শিত হয়, তৎপরে ওরিয়েন্টল থিয়েটারের ছাত্ররাও নাটক কাণ্ড করিয়াছেন, তাঁহাদিগের দ্বারাও উত্তমরূপে সকল ব্যাপার সমাধা হইয়াছে তথাচ এরূপ সর্বত্র সুন্দররূপে সম্পাদন হয় নাই।

[Last Wednesday evening some worthy young Hindoo gentlemen of this country won applause by acting most laudably, a play about Julius Caesar's death in five acts written by the great poet Shakespeare, at the residence of the extremely worthy Baboo Pyarimohan Basu, now living in Jorasanko. Although we have had earlier instances of English plays being acted by the men of this country at the Hare Academy, and later, by the students of the Oriental Theatre, who have also presented good performances yet those have not been as well as this one.]

Jyotirindranath, who seems to have been a man of varied interests, takes up this play and succeeds in bringing across a lot of the highly dramatic and dignified rhetoric which Shakespeare must have intended to communicate through this play. But even Jyotirindranath suffers from a stilted language because there had been no tradition of poetic drama before him. In the well known funeral speech of Mark Antony the Bengali language stands stiff and unyielding in his hands:

এহু আমি ক্রটাসের—সকলের অমৃতিক্রমে
আর এই ক্রটাস ইনি একজন মহাশয় লোক।
(কেবল ক্রটাস কেন—সকলেই মহাশয় লোক!)

এহু হেথা বলিবারে সীজারের অন্ত্যেষ্টিক্রম তরে।...

[I have come with permission from Brutus and others and this Brutus is an honourable man. (Why only Brutus, they are all honourable men!) I have come to address Caesar's funeral.]

Another interesting case is the poet Hem Chandra Bandyopadhyaya when he takes up Shakespeare. In 1868 he had translated *The Tempest* and called it *Nalini Basanta*. But the result clearly shows that he is not interested in the dramatic qualities of the play: he consistently undermines the dramatic to heighten the narrative aspect of the play. The author of *Vytrasamhār* and *Virbāhu* will naturally feel far more at home with the narrative than with the dramatic. Thus, instead of the lively storm scene with which the play

let us prepare the way for future ones. Have you heard of Sackville—Lord Backhurst, born in 1527? This nobleman's play called 'Gorboduc' first introduced to Englishmen the form of verse in which William Shakespeare wrote."¹²

Had Madhusudan been able to gather around him enough men with zeal, diligence, enthusiasm and liberal views the standard of drama in the nineteenth century might have reached a literary excellence without precluding dramatic authenticity. But in the general turmoil of activity with which theatres were being opened and great actors were coming up, the actual plays came to have a very poor part to play. While great actors like Ardhendushekhhar Mustaphi, Amritalal Mitra, Amritalal Basu, Girish Ghosh and Amarendranath Datta continued to be inspired by the theatrical possibility of Shakespearian plays, good translations could not be effected. The intellectual equipment available to the Bengali theatre in the nineteenth century was never adequate for a significant adaptation of Shakespeare.¹³ That the paucity lay in intellectual equipment is made quite clear in isolated instances of slightly more successful translations of Shakespeare's plays. The most notable one among these is *Julius Caesar* translated by Jyotirindranath Tagore, the poet's brother. A man of considerable cultivation Jyotirindranath wanted to share the glory of European literature with his countrymen. His translations from Gautier and adaptations from Molière have about them the ease of a man whose intellectual reception of Western literature was very acute. The same power of acclimatisation is seen in his translation of *Julius Caesar*. To a nation that was just waking up to a consciousness of Parliamentary procedures, the lure of Shakespeare's rendering of Roman rhetoric must have been quite considerable. In fact, *Julius Caesar* was frequently acted in those days. To take an illustration, *Sambad Prabhakkar*, of 5th May, 1854 records enthusiastically a performance of *Julius Caesar*:

গত বুধবার সন্ধ্যার পরে ষোড়াসাঁকো নিবাসি গুণরাশি শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু প্যারিমোহন বসু মহাশয়ের ভবনে এতদেশীয় কৃতবিদ্য হিন্দু যুবকগণ মহাকবি সেক্সপিয়ার প্রণীত নাটক জুলিয়াস সিজারের মৃত্যু বিষয়ক নাট্যকাণ্ডের পঞ্চম প্রকরণ... অতি উত্তমরূপে প্রদর্শনপূর্বক সম্পূর্ণরূপে স্মৃতি সংগ্রহ করিয়াছেন। যদিও হেয়ার একাডেমিতে এতদেশীয় ব্যক্তিদিগের দ্বারা ইংরাজী নাটক দেখাইবার

In his sleep man has varie reams
 The soul has delirious dreams after death.
 The dream of sleep suddenly ends in life,
 In death the dream of sleep never ends.]

Similarly, Girish Ghosh, who was believed to have been very much preoccupied with the theatre of Shakespeare, could not help but muffle the moral upheaval which Shakespeare presents so significantly in the witch scenes of *Macbeth*. In his translation Girish Ghosh, who was most intimately associated with the development of the Bengali theatre and who knew exactly what would pay on the Bengali stage, reduces the Witch scenes into sensation-mongering of the worst order:

হেলা দোলা, চাতর মেলা
 বাদার জলে দলে দলে খেলা ; —
 কিলি কিলি খিলি খিলি হেসে ভেসে,
 কুয়াশায় চল সেথায়
 হিলি হিলি হিলি হিলি সাই সাই সাই and so on.

[This cannot be translated as it is almost entirely onomatopoeic.]

By the turn of the nineteenth century it is quite clear that the Bengali stage had been given over to the sentimental excesses of 'social' plays, and poetry had been stoutly refused admission. With this Shakespeare begins to recede into the rut of dead academic renderings. When in 1909 Dwijendralal Roy astutely adapts him in his *Shahjahan* it is merely to depict the excessiveness of the deposed king's sufferings. The process of moral regeneration which lends a point to the excruciating agony of King Lear is completely absent here.¹⁹ As the weak ending of D. L. Roy's play clearly shows, the similarity with Shakespeare remains only superficial. The climate of the Bengali stage had proved entirely unsuitable for transplanting Shakespeare.

What had started with a bang, thus ends with a whimper. The reason is that the demands and equipments of the nineteenth century Bengali theatre were not at all suitable for a proper reception of Shakespeare into the language. Meanwhile, Shakespeare remained alive in the hearts of the great actors of Bengal and in the classrooms of schools and colleges. It is a pity that Rabindranath's translation

commences in Shakespeare, Hemchandra introduces a “*Prastābanā*” (prologue) :

বৈজয়ন্ত নামে রাজা ককন ভূপতি
নিরবধি ষাট্ৰবিষ্ঠা করি আলোচনা
হারাইল রাজ্যদেশ ভ্রাতার কপটে...
পরে কুহকের শক্তি প্রকাশি অসৌম্য
বিপক্ষ দমন করি ফিরিল স্বদেশে ।
এ আখ্যান চমৎকার শুন মন দিয়া
শুনিলে কোতুক হবে চিত্ত বিনোদিয়া ।

[The king of Kankan named Vaijayanta
Spending his days in endless discussion of magic
Lost his kingdom through his brother's deception
Later, by showing the infinite power of magic
He defeated his enemies and returned home.
Listen to this magnificent tale with all your attention
It will satisfy your curiosity and give you pleasure.]

Thus it is transmuted into a story of the love of Nalini and Basanta (Miranda and Ferdinand).

This insistence on the story element had deadly effects on Bengali translations. All the ideas about the ethical world of man which permeate Shakespeare's plays and give them such inexhaustible depth have been consistently sacrificed to produce an easily digestible story on the stage. Thus a certain Chandiprasad Ghosh translating *Hamlet* in 1894 completely ignores the issue of the ethical justification of suicide which Shakespeare raises in his soliloquy ‘To be or not to be.’ This is how he renders the relevant section :

মৃত্যু—নিদ্রা সম,
মরণে নিদ্রায় নাহি আছে কোন ভেদ ।
নিদ্রায় মানব হেরে স্বপ্ন বহুবিধ
মরিলে আত্মার হয় স্বপ্নের বিকার ।
জীবনে নিদ্রার স্বপ্ন শীঘ্র ভেঙে যায়,
মরণে নিদ্রার স্বপ্ন কত না দূরায় ।

[Death—it is like sleep
There is no difference between death and sleep.

'TOPICS' IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

A few years ago, topos-research emerged as another method in literary science and has produced since some appreciable results. This article intends to deal with the concept of the topos, the method of topos-research, and to report on some research-work done in this field.

The concept of the topos (Greek: *topos*; Latin: *locus*) originated from Greco-Roman rhetoric, where it marked the habitat (finding place) of all arguments to be used in an oration.¹ The topos gained its importance from the fact that the orator, especially in a speech in court, need not search painfully for arguments in his demonstration, but would have at hand an ordered and practicable catalogue of such arguments. We note here that the term topos itself already means the single argument. This becomes clear enough if we look at a subsection of arguments which are not only applicable in a certain limited case, but which are of unlimited quality and which lift the special defined case to a higher level of consideration: the loci communes. The English term "commonplace", like the German "Gemeinplatz", is a direct translation. Fr. Kluge² sums up the history of the concept in the German language: "The frequently used locus communis of the humanists of the 16th century (French: lieu commun; Netherl.: gemeenplaats) became English "commonplace". Wieland (1770), Jean Paul (1785) and Goethe (1786) translate it as "Gemeinplatz" which Adelung 1776 still refused intransigently. Kant and Lessing say "Gemeinort", Goethe also "Gemeinspruch", he and Schiller "Gemeinsatz". Campe

of *Macbeth* has not survived properly. What little has survived of the Witch scenes is extremely promising. And poets and dramatists of the twentieth century have not left off the task of translating and adapting him for the stage. But as the times have changed so people have begun to look for different things from Shakespeare. Understandably, therefore, the modern translations of Shakespeare tell an altogether different story.

¹ *The days of John Company: Selections from Calcutta Gazette, 1824-1832.* W. B. G. Press, Calcutta. 1959. pp. 490-491.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 361-362.

³ *Bangiya Nātyasālār Itihās*, Brajendranath Bandyopadhyaya; and *Sājghar*, Indra Mitra.

⁴ *Western Influence in Bengali literature*, P. R. Sen. University of Calcutta. p. 207.

⁵ *Bānglā Sāhityer Itihās*, Sukumar Sen.

⁶ *Bhrāntivilās*, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁸ In 1848, for instance, was published *Julietér Manohar Upākhyan* by Gurudas Hazra, and in 1852 *Stories from Shakespeare* by Muktaram Vedantavagish and E. Roer.

⁹ *Jhanjhā*, Nagendraprasad Sarbadhikary, and *Prakriti* Mukhopadhyaya.

¹⁰ *Bhānumati Chittavilās*, Harachandra Ghosh. 1853.

¹¹ *Kavi Madhusudan O Tnār Patrāvali*, Kshetra Gupta (ed.). Calcutta, 1963. 166.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 162-3.

¹³ This I maintain in spite of Swami Vivekananda's assertion that some of Girish Ghosh's plays were 'superior to those of Shakespeare'!

¹⁴ *Sambād Prabhākar*, May 5, 1854, quoted in *Sambādpatré Sēkāler Samājchitra*, Benoy Ghosh.

¹⁵ *Julius Caesar* (tr.), Jyotirindranath Tagore, in *Bosumati*. p. 280.

¹⁶ *Nalini Vasanta*, Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya. Calcutta.

¹⁷ *Hamlet* (tr.), Chandiprasad Ghosh. 1894. p. 58.

¹⁸ *Macbeth* (tr.), Girish Gosh. Calcutta, V. C. Bose. 1899.

¹⁹ *Sājāhān*, Dwijendralal Roy, V, iii, in *Dwijendra Rachanāvali*, I, (ed.) Rathindranath Roy. 1964. pp. 287-9.

genus demonstrativum takes over the technique of traditional poetry and hands back to poetry the detailed technique of rhetoric as a refined instrument."¹ Mathieu de Vendôme gives in his *Ars Versificatoria* (How To Write Verses) a very typical example of such a turn.²

In this way arguments which had become pure elements of rhetorical ornament also came into literature. They have been recently subsumed in various interpretations under the general concept of *topoi*. A distinction into rhetorical or poetical *topoi* according to their origin either in rhetoric or poetry is essential because of the historic development. Collections of *topoi* have always been made since classical Antiquity. They gained great favour in the middle ages and during the Renaissance. The latinists did the first research by cataloguing them as "*colores rhetorici*" or "*antique battle-topoi*", but they did not define the concept of *topoi* sufficiently. On the contrary, they made no distinction between formulas, tropes, metaphors, sentences, examples, illustrations, and motifs. They were called *topoi* because as parts of a piece of literature they had been taken over verbatim from Greek into Roman literature or because they showed a certain frequency within the literature concerned. It was E. R. Curtius who recognized the value of *topoi* for the inquiry into the tradition of European literature as a totality. It was he who laid the basis for Topics as assisting discipline in the science of literature (*Literaturwissenschaft*) in his book *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. He placed the *topos* once again in its rhetoric context and kept the Greek term because the German "*Gemeinplatz*" as well as the English "*common-place*" had lost their original meaning, and because a term in *Literaturwissenschaft* should be acceptable without difficulty to non-German scholars and should be applicable to non-German literature, too. E. R. Curtius takes the *topoi* as clichés which are generally applicable and which spread over all parts of life, penetrated by and formed in literature. In a short catalogue he has collected a number of *topoi*: "affected modesty, 'all must die', anger as an epic motif, ape as metaphor, *armas y letras*, *brevitas* formula, comparison of the kinds of love, dedication, discoverer *topos*, *dulcedo*, *exordium*, *fastidium*, *fortitudo et sapientia*, God as painter, I bring things said before, India *topos*, inexpressibility, *locus amoenus*, ought man to marry?, outdoing, panegyric, perpetual spring, poetry,

finally insists on "Gemeinplatz", the adjective "gemeinplätzlich" (for banal, trivial) was immediately taken over by Schiller."

Beside the *topoi* used in rhetoric, Aristotle developed a philosophical theory on *topoi*. In logic *Topics* is a method "by which we are able to draw conclusions from probable sentences on any proposed problem ..." (100 a 18). The *topoi* are here the areas out of which the arguments in dialectical (i.e. hypothetical) conclusions are extracted. Here it becomes clear that the *topoi* are the elements or, better, the general form-principles of the arguments in rhetoric as well as in logic. There is little said yet either about the actual use or application to a problem: this is decided only in the case of a factual problem. But as principles the *topoi* are neither perishable nor subject to any change in tradition.

Topoi are used not only in rhetoric but also in literature. The shift from rhetoric to literature takes place in rhetoric itself. At their origin, to be sure, rhetoric and poetry (which I take to include lyric, dramatic and epic poetry) are separated by their basic intentions: rhetoric tries to exert a direct influence on a given audience, while the task of poetry is to present human existence in its reality; its means are not speeches but "mimesis" (imitation).³ But rhetoric and poetry are in fact drawn close together at the very moment the speech is written down and published because of its artistic value. The orations of Cicero are the best known examples of this. Moreover, the different forms of speeches have favoured this kind of assimilation. Of the three possible kinds of speeches—according to the distinction made by the authors of Antiquity—the speech in court (*genus iudicale*), the political oration (*genus deliberativum*) and the panegyric (*genus demonstrativum*)—the panegyric departs most from an actual and defined cause (*causa finita*) and turns to a more general theme (*causa infinita*). While in Greek and Roman history the judicial speech and the political harangue lost their function and importance gradually, the panegyric alone continued to be exercised both in school and in public, and developed more and more into an artistic display of rhetoric with the main aim to praise beauty of any kind. It is appreciated and judged by its artistic qualities. "The masterly element (*l'art pour l'art*) as well as the choice of themes in the speech drew the *genus demonstrativum* nearer to poetry from which it differs in the end only through lack of metric form. The influence is mutual, as the

formulas and phrases. This has been done very rarely. Since Curtius, too, has not prepared a clear distinction, there are infinite possibilities of application and critique. L. Arbusow⁷ combines a variety of elements under the name of the topos. H. Beumann⁸ takes it, when applying the new method to the *Vita Caroli Magni* of Einhard, as "conventional scheme of thoughts", as "traditional truth", or as "motif". When revising the editions of medieval authors the new method helps him to recognize and to demonstrate their traditional rhetorical values, i.e. that the medieval biography is written along the pattern of antique biographies, in this special case on the pattern of Suetonius. W. Kayser⁹ suggests that a topos can become a motif. E. Frenzel¹⁰ interprets the topos as a sunken motif which can no longer be estimated as an expression or result of an impression or experience, but is based entirely on the imitation of stylistical and rhetorical methods. A. Gehlen¹¹ is of the opinion that we find topoi in the psychic faculties, i.e. fixed forms of feeling, sensing, and thinking. On the same basis B. Snell¹² describes the structural elements of lyrics as topoi in which the consciousness of the tensions in one's own life are solidified and represented. This consciousness of the personal situation is often connected with the experience of an interior dialectic.

While here the tradition of a literary form-element and its foundation in internal and external experience was in view, O. Pöggeler¹³ has tried to re-establish the topoi again in the sphere of "the old dialectic and art of dialogue", and to define the science of the topoi as the topology of the dialogue. This topology takes a close look at the changing history of a topos and takes it as a flexible expression by which the opportunity is gained to get into the dialogue of history itself. Since we reach here through that which is only given in tradition to that which was thought originally, the definition of Topics as a non-systematic form of thinking becomes possible.

Similar efforts have been made in Spain by Menendez Pidal,¹⁴ Maria Rosa Lida,¹⁵ and Gonzáles de Escadón¹⁶ which must be mentioned here. In France the concept of the topos has not yet been incorporated; the literary phenomena are covered by other disciplines, i.e. the inquiry into symbols and themes, for instance. In England the topos is known in its translation as "commonplace", but restricted in its importance to the antithesis between originality and tradition, and even further to the aspect that poetry has the task to rediscover the

puer senex, quinque lineae sunt amoris, rejuvenation, self-belittlement, straying in a wood, the world upside down, etc." Some of these topoi are more closely examined in special chapters. Curtius also shows that not all topoi are to be derived from rhetoric, but that a considerable number of them have been shifted from poetry to rhetoric, for instance the topoi of natural beauty, dreamlands, and dream-ages, the elysium with eternal spring, the paradise on earth, the golden age. Besides these he also mentions "life-forces", "timeless original situations" such as love, friendship and transiency. Here the topoi are no longer only forms of argument, but also have a fixed content which further determines the substance of subordinate arguments.

To identify topoi and to inquire into their tradition is, however, only one side of the analysis, the aim of which is to provide the ground for historical Topics, for a method to enable us to recognize traditional themes in literature. This is not done for tradition's sake, but to regain and to reshape the original unity of meaning which has been lost in the literary history of the different nations. The national literatures will then appear also in the new light of a European homogeneity. This historical and philological method attempts to clarify the constant and continuous elements in literature, and also in a kind of literature-biology to observe the genesis and evolution of new topoi, and in this way to contribute to knowledge of the origin of literary elements and to the inquiry into the "changing state of the soul", the signs of which become obvious in the nuances and changes of the topoi. Curtius supposes rightly that it will be possible with the help of an inquiry into the topoi to acquire a new understanding of the spiritual history of the Occident, and to penetrate into spheres which were first explored in the psychology of C. G. Jung. In some topoi archetypical situations become visible; they provide the philological starting-point for an inquiry into the views of life represented by them. In this way it is, for example, possible to work out the attitude of man towards death in its various forms, firstly by an exact cataloguing and then by a penetrating interpretation of the old topos "all must die".⁶

But if we want to conduct the inquiry into the topoi methodically and unambiguously, it is necessary to differentiate the topos from the bordering elements of literary form, i.e. from motifs, emblems, images, clichés, symbols and allegories, from all quotations, fixed

examples may be given. In a consolatory speech, as in use even today, the argument can be brought forward that everything human is bound to perish because it is begotten and born, and also that the heroes of old had to die. These are only two of many arguments out of the same topos: "all must die." Curtius and Bailey²⁰ have located and collected quite a number of such arguments. Or: an author is overcome—as only recently Thomas Mann's Felix Krull—by "slight scruples" whether he would be able to finish his work, partly because of weak health, partly because he lacks the necessary talent to find the correct words to express his opinion properly. We find this already in Homer (*Il.* 2,488) and Virgil (*Aen.* 625 ff.). This is one part of the very large "captatio benevolentiae", literally "capture of good will". By this an orator in court tried from the very beginning of his speech to move the audience in favour of his case. Or: God is so inconceivable that all the possibilities of language are not sufficient to describe Him properly. This and the captatio benevolentiae are at first humility topoi as they have been used traditionally in rhetoric, and not only in European literature. The Indian epos *Raghuvamsha*²¹ starts in the same manner. But I have not yet been able to find the rhetorical formula in Indian handbooks of rhetoric as we do in Cicero (inv. 1,16,22), Herennius (I,5,8), and Quintilianus (IV,1,16), and others throughout classical and medieval times.

A topos which has gone in the opposite direction from poetry to rhetoric is that of the Golden Age—which is to be discussed in detail below among the examples of research-work done. The formulation appears at first in antique cosmogonies and then serves in various forms as a contrast to the bad present, as well as an indication of a better future. In the mutual exchange between rhetoric and poetry the formulation becomes fixed in its characteristics, but its quality as an argument remains: the argument becomes a fixed form-element in literature when an author takes it from somewhere and gives it a place in his own work.

When we look upon the use of the topos as an argument the difference between it and the other form-elements in literature becomes clearer. The topos can of course be reduced to the pure concept, i.e. "mother nature" (*natura mater*) to "nature". The pure concept expresses the abstract, the general, the conception of a thing in thoughts. The topos on the contrary expresses the special, the

old truth and wisdom, which are debased to commonplaces, and to reconsider and re establish them in a new context.¹⁷ Recently N. Frye¹⁸ has pointed out the richness of *topoi* when taken as structural principles in literature. It is, however, not easy to decide whether in all these efforts the possibilities of the *topos* are really enlarged, or considerably surpassed. But nevertheless it does become clear that beside a historic Topic in the proper sense, an inquiry into the history of motifs, metaphors, symbols, etc. and a Topic of psychology have to be developed separately, if this has not been done already.

II. Proposed methods

Against the background of the varying efforts and opinions quoted above, the method and efficiency of Topics in the science of literature have to be examined carefully. E. Auerbach¹⁹ has defined it as an attempt at a "philology of world literature". He writes:

The method has been known for a long while. In research into style, for instance, it has been used for a long time to describe the particularities of a style by certain characteristics. But it seems necessary to me to point out the importance of the method in general as the only one at present which allows us to present important processes of the inner history against a broad background synthetically and suggestively. It also enables a younger scholar, even a beginner, to do this; a comparatively small knowledge of the whole, supported by some advice, is sufficient as soon as the intuition has found a lucky starting point. While the research is carried out in detail, the horizon is extended in a sufficient and natural manner since the choice of the material is defined by the principles of approach; the extension is so concrete, its parts cohere so necessarily that the results cannot easily be lost again; and the results themselves as a cross-section have unity and universality at the same time.

But in order to reach this goal, it is necessary to mark off the *topoi* in concept, content, and function from other literary form-elements. We take the *topos* as a form-element of its own by going back to its traditional meaning as a source of argument in rhetoric and poetry. At first it is meant to prove an opinion. A few

is still effective today as a response to the same problem. For originally all these fixed form-elements of today were neither fixed and rigid nor *ad libitum* and interchangeable, but were important and genuine arguments in rhetoric and creative presentations of reality in poetics. Bailey (cf. l.c.) has clearly indicated how in English poetry the "commonplace" "all must die" had to be discovered again and again to present the expressed experience relevantly and strikingly, which as "poetical commodity" recurrently becomes flat and meaningless. He decides the antagonism between traditionalism and originality obviously in favour of the latter. Only originality, Bailey thinks, makes poetry worth-while, the literary tradition is passed over as "commonplace". He also overlooks the value of traditional form-elements. The topos hands on much more than a pure formula: it remains constantly on the horizon of argumentation where something is stated and proved. And even in the case where we are able to show that a topos came automatically into a piece of literature, it has, nevertheless, its importance for the knowledge of the universal, perhaps subconscious presence and evaluation of the idea. With the formulation of a specific topos an experience or cognition is handed on in the form of a topical pattern of thinking. The topos itself points at that which is thought in it, and a sincere topos-research takes its relevance from just this inquiry into the meaning of the topos. Topos-research should not end with the collecting and cataloguing of the topoi, even if we give utmost importance to the continuity of a topos or its complete absence during a certain period. It is important to show the emergence of new topoi. But this is only the philological preparation for a subsequent interpretation. The poetical topoi, especially, shed light not only on the connections between the national literatures, but also on the changing relationship to reality expressed in them. Thus the topos "mater natura" is constantly repeated in new formulations. It becomes necessary to see it first in its function in the context and the composition of the whole piece of literature, and secondly to interpret it with the help of the understanding of "nature" in contemporary philosophy; and finally to clarify the hidden change under the same verbal guise through the centuries. To reveal this cosmos of theological and philosophical ideas which are hidden under the continuous form-pattern, but which take form and work through literature—this is

individual, and the concrete, the presentation and figuration of a general idea in literature. The concept is the proper object of a history of concepts, the methods of which are by all means important for topos-research.

We see, on the other hand, the proximity of the topos to larger form-elements such as image, motif, and others. The topos can grow to be an image, i.e. topoi of the beauty of nature. In that case the function of an image is taken over by the topos additionally. Or the topos can be enlarged to a motif. (The motif has to be defined as the verbal abstract of a repeated typical and important situation in life; the scheme of this situation represents the motivity or moving forces of a drama, novel, or even poem). W. Kayser has pointed this out quite clearly. Then it becomes one of the many motifs in literature, i.e. the rhetorical topos 'a persona': "he is—or is not—like his father" is enlarged to the "father-son-motif". Even the enlargement to the content of a literary work is possible. We find this in Goethe's *Novelle*, where the topos of the Golden Age becomes the central event, the "happening unheard of". In all these cases it is decisive for criticism that the topos expands to perform another function, that of an image or a motif or a content. This has to be strictly observed in interpretations. Vice versa, naturally, images, emblems, and motifs can be investigated for their topical background and character. This change of function is very important for topos-research. The discovery that topoi have been misunderstood has been the first step in the discussion of this form-element. Curtius has exposed a series of grave mistakes in interpretations which are based on such misunderstanding. Thus the topos of senility (I am getting old . . .) has been mistaken for a personal confession; the rhetorical ideal landscape for a good observation of nature. Such a misunderstanding is philologically relevant, i.e. if the *Vita* of a Saint is not seen in relation to antique biography and rhetorical encomia on persons (cf. Lausberg § 376), as it was shown in Einhard's *Vita Caroli Magni*. Even more far reaching consequences are indicated by the discussion of the "system of chivalric virtues" (cf. Curtius, *Excurs XVIII*). Besides the form and function of the topos, rhetorical as well as poetic, another important part of the research becomes visible: the tradition. Out of tradition grows the importance of the fixed form which was formed in Greek times or even earlier and which has come down to the middle ages and

the introductory verses of the last part of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*. Here we find the rhetorical topos of the invocation of the Muses. He does not limit himself merely to noting the topos. The poetical achievement at this spot is also shown. The invocation appears not at the beginning of the whole poem but at the beginning of the last part. In doing so the importance of the following verses is clearly indicated, and the preceding verses are briefly summarized and seen from a higher point of view. From these deliberations on the methodological approach in topos-research we draw the conclusion that the topos has to be taken essentially as an argument. By this it becomes relevant for the interpretation as an element of form, characterized by its tradition, and form of thinking, pointing to the basic structure of reality.

is stage to consider some examples of research-

1. E. R. Curtius himself in the chapters "Poetry and Philosophy" and "Poetry and Theology" of his book *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* has drawn attention to a topos concerning the theory of poetry. In literature the question of the meaning of poetry is raised very often and answered in different ways. We find there poetry taken as "another philosophy" or "another theology", opinions which originate in antique literature and which are, with certain modifications, maintained even today. Our question now is what does this indicate and how basic structures of reality are thus revealed. R. Bachem has made this question the point of his book on *Poetry as Hidden Theology*.²³ He starts in the Introduction from Plato's description of poetry as a lie. We find this opinion maintained by Hesiod, Solon, Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. Plato views poetry as a lie with regard to man, Kierkegaard with regard to religious existence, and Nietzsche with regard to life.

The main part is then headlined: Poetry as Hidden Theology. At first the meaning of the topos as "abstract theology" is expounded: a theology which does not regard the artistic values in art, looks

what gives importance to topos-research, going because of this special aim far beyond the starting-point of Curtius. It takes the topos in its historical connection and tries on the one hand to recognize its relation to the literary-rhetorical tradition; on the other hand it tries to show the force of argumentation in the piece of literature concerned. We thus come to realize that the traditional form hints at diverging aspects of one and the same matter. We find for example a very different perception of death under the same topos "all must die" in Homer (*Il.* VI, 486 ff.), Horace, Catullus (*Vivamus mea Lesbia*), Prudentius (*Nunc suscipe*), Paul Gerhardt (*Abendlied*), and Goethe (*Dauer im Wechsel*). It is obvious that in the topos a relationship to reality is formed and expressed, to recognize which is the aim of any interpretation. And since a relationship to reality is revealed and formed in the topoi, they have been called forms of thinking. Topos-research in the science of literature therefore has been given the task of clarifying the structure of this relationship, its meaning and the history of its meaning. The method is philological and analytic in the search for the topoi, but historical and synthetic in the interpretation of them.

We have, however, to warn against an overvaluation of the possibilities of topos-research which may arise from an over-emphasis on this method. This approach places beside the romantic concept of originality the concept of tradition as a counterpart, and beside discontinuity as a category in the science of literature, continuity. But beside the continuity of the topoi, their organic function in the new literary work has to be accounted for, otherwise the true proportions of the work will be destroyed. Rhetoric was able to become a reservoir of literary forms only because it was taken as a matter of course that forms and elements had their existence only in a functional connection with the work which art is directed to create. The work itself is primarily a self-sufficient whole. Continuity and discontinuity in literature are in this connection secondary philological categories. The primary interest of a piece of literature lies in what has made it a piece of art, i.e. its content or its artistic means, the composition for instance, not its connection with literary tradition. It is not yet decided whether in a given interpretation it would be worse to misunderstand a topos or to neglect its positional value, its function in a given composition, its forming force. H. Seidler²² has done justice to both aspects in the case of

fore for Novalis and Schlegel poetry is a "new Romantic irony itself is able to represent the absolute.

It is now quite clear that we have been dealing with a special aspect of one definition of poetry as the expression of reality. The topos Hidden Theology unfolds one aspect of the matter as a whole. Our question is: How did it happen that just this aspect was chosen? The same question is to be asked concerning the conception of poetry as philosophy or "altera natura". We have to put this question because only in this way can the essence of the topos be understood. If the conception of reality is changed, the conception of art in general or poetry in particular as presented reality will presumably also be changed. Where are we supposed to find the changing of the conception of poetry, of the theory of poetry itself from Plato down to our own time, if not in this changing interpretation of reality? Only against the background of this general understanding can we take modern lyrics for poetry, modern theoretical investigations into poetry as poetics. And it is in this general connection that a topology of poetry as initiation into reality is the next step in research. The preparation for such an inquiry is given in the many works on aesthetics since Plato and Aristotle. They have only to be collected under the methodical guidance of topology. We have to find the topos to clarify its meaning with connected characteristics. Among them we find the conception of poetry as theology, philosophy and "altera natura" together with metaphors and symbols. We have to inquire into the reasons for a change in meaning in spite of the same outer formulation, and finally to show the principle itself in an interpretation of the conception of reality.

2. My own preoccupation has been with the poetical topos of the Golden Age in which the relationship between time and eternity is revealed.

The Greek and Roman form as well as the Jewish-Christian form of the topos has to be inquired into separately for their origin and meaning. Confining ourselves to European literature we find the topos in Hesiod, then in Aratus, Aeschylus and Pindar always in connection with concepts such as "chronos" (time), "hybris", "dike" (justice), "eirene" (peace), and "ennomia" (order) and their opposites. The resulting phenomena show as their foundation a

only at the knowledge of the divine presented in literature. This approach can already be seen in the allegorical interpretation of Homer: the stoic Cornutus finds in Homer and Hesiod the traces of a hidden original theology. This type of allegorical interpretation is then applied by Clemens of Alexandria and Basilus to the whole of antique literature; early Christianity treats the Old Testament in no other way. Ulysses is taken to foreshadow Christ, and Virgil grows to be the "anima naturaliter christiana". At the head of this theological interpretation of poetry we see Giovanni Boccaccio. In German poetry of the 17th and 18th century, with Opitz and his contemporaries this definition of poetry as theology is again maintained, echoing antique and renaissance aesthetics. In a closely connected definition the topos means "represented theology" in the sense of Christian allegory. Alanus ab Insulis takes poetry as an image of Christian philosophy. To others it is a theological example: for Dante a vision; for the German baroque poets an example from history, a historic document of God's interference in the world or an invented story for the conversion of one's own fellow-men, as for instance in Ulrich, Gryphius, and Grimmelshausen.

In German classical and romantic literature poetry is mostly defined as "intuitive theology". Hamann and Lowth developed a new understanding of the concept of mythos which was brought into poetry by Herder: the mythos is the intuition of the divine presence.²⁴ This conception of poetry as the vision of the Divine in the world finds its proper expression in the theory of symbols. Goethe and Hegel came to it in two different ways: Hegel through the relation of art and theology mentioned above and Goethe through the vision of the Divine in the original phenomenon. The common aesthetic ground in the age of Goethe is the definition of poetry, i.e. symbolic poetry, as mundane hidden theology. But besides this conception of poetry as mythical and symbolic, there is in Goethe's time yet another possibility under the same head of hidden theology: poetry as romantic allegory, which is sharply distinguished from the medieval antique allegory. The romantic allegory turns to the absolute, to let the infinite be divined in the finite—paralleling the philosophy of idealism of the time. Thus poetry is intuitive theology because feeling becomes the mode of cognition. "The reality closest at hand is recognized as most unreal, the true Being is the sphere of highest revelation breathing in the Divine, the world of emotion." There-

presented in poetry. Existence and thinking show the same constitution unfolded as a triad in literary presentation. As a second source for the meaning of the topos the Jewish-Christian origin is mentioned. Here we find the name Eternal Peace which proves to be interchangeable with Golden Age. The cyclic temporal structure requires again an inquiry into the relation between time and eternity which forms the foundation of the whole.

In any interpretation the concept of "aon" which always appears in the context, plays an important role. And here we find the Christian conception of time so characteristically different from the antique. It is explicitly given in Boethius and St. Augustine. The antique cyclic conception is transformed into a linear one, into salvation. History has no longer a cyclic structure. After the coming of Christ there can be no further revolutions of history but only one way to the Last Judgement; mankind is saved, reconciled to God, time will find its end in eternity without further secessions. It is from this explication of time and eternity, of history and salvation by St. Augustine, that the modern European conception of time originates.

The Golden Age and Eternal Peace have proved to be related topoi. They are separately founded and separately transmitted modes of explication, forms of thinking of the same time-eternity relationship: as eternized mundanity in Virgil, as supramundane eternity in St. Augustine.

After an inquiry into the twofold origin of the topos in European literature, the investigation is continued into the poetry of the 17th and 18th century. The relation between time and eternity becomes obvious here, too. An extreme evaluation of eternity, completely in line with the Christian exegesis, is to be found in Grimmelshausen, Gryphius, Rist, Gerhardt, and others. It finally appears as happy actuality, especially in the idyllic poetry of Tasso, Guarini and Gessner, but also in Klopstock and Wieland. The explication of the topos of the Golden Age as a form of thinking on time and eternity in baroque times and during the Enlightenment shows the characteristic positions of the epochs concerned.

Baroque thinking, mysticism, and pietism experience the scholastic solution of the problem as very questionable. The interrupted relation between time and eternity has to be somehow bridged, an attempt every poet is bound to make. The history of salvation is offered as

structure of time which can be described as "cyclic". A similar field of meaning results from an interpretation of the topos in Ovid, Virgil, Horace, and Tibullus, especially in Virgil's fourth Eclogue. Here, too, the connection between "aurea aetas" (golden age) and "pax" (peace) is obvious.

The inquiry into the Greek and the Roman conception of this topos leads to a discussion of the conception of history and its essence, time. We recognize the following basic structure: The beginning of history is known as the "golden age" which has deteriorated step by step, and has reached in the present a final stage, an end-time with all signs of injustice, utter discord, and separation from the Gods, comparable to the "*Kali yuga*" in Indian religious thinking. For those living amidst the terrors of the present all hope lies in a new Golden Age which will bring history itself to an end. How did this structure originate? What is its ontological foundation? The question is answered by interpretations regarding Pindar, Sophocles, Anaximander, Plato and Plotinus; the interpretation of poetry is supported by that of philosophy which reveals explicitly and in essence what appears inexplicitly but constitutively in poetry. The result in short is this: God has created the world after his original image; the more the reflection becomes like the original image, the idea, the more perfect, the more living it is. Concerning the relation to the eternal Being, to the One, resting in itself, to God, Perfection itself, the world exists only as a reflection of this eternity, it exists in time. Because all rise and fall exists in time, only the Being, existing in itself, is imperishable. As something created this reflection is at the same time a secession from the real being. Only the return leads again to the perfect. Secession means annihilation, its essence is hybris. This relation between time and eternity marks the innermost structure of the topos of the Golden Age. It is only on the basis of this fundamental relation that the Golden Age and eternity coincide. The defection from this foundation through hybris and injustice causes time, the decline of the Golden Age. As the fundamental ontological structure, which is clearly explicated in Plotinus' philosophy, it is at the same time the constitution of the principle of life, of nature as a whole regarding temporality. This constitution makes it understandable that this ontological structure has an effect on poetical composition: the constitution of Being is reflected in the formal structure of a reality

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¹ Cf. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, 1960, for all the references to Latin and Greek authors, pp. 373-399.

² Fr. Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, 17. Aufl. von W. Mitzka, Berlin 1957, p. 247.

³ Lausberg, l.c. pp. 1156-1242; E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, transl. from the German by W. R. Trask, Princeton 1953.

⁴ Lausberg, l.c. pp. 239-242; p. 39; E. Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, 2. Aufl. 1909; E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. from the German by Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series XXXVI, N. Y. 1953, p. 68 ff.; Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition*, 1949.

⁵ Ed. Faral, *Les Art Poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle; Recherches et Documents sur la Technique Littéraire du Moyen Age*, Paris 1923, p. 109 ff.

⁶ J. Bailey, *The Continuity of Letters*, Ox. 1923, p. 242 ff. Poetry a Commonplace.

⁷ L. Arbusow, *Colores Rhetorici*, Göttingen 1948, p. 91 ff.

⁸ H. Beumann, *Topos und Gedankengefüge bei Einhard*, Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 33, 1951; p. 337 ff.

⁹ W. Kayser, *Das Sprachliche Kunstwerk, Eine Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft*, 8. Aufl. München 1962, p. 72 ff.

¹⁰ E. Frenzel, *Stoff-, Motiv- und Symbolforschung*, Stuttgart 1963.

¹¹ A. Gehlen, *Die Seele im technischen Zeitalter*, Hamburg 1957.

¹² B. Snell, *Der Aufbau der Sprache*, Hamburg 1952, p. 180.

¹³ O. Pöggeler, *Dichtungstheorie und Toposforschung*, Jahrbuch für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, Bd. V, 1960 pp. 89-201.

¹⁴ M. Pidal, cf. W. Kayser, l.c.

¹⁵ M. R. Lida, *Transmisión y recreación de temas grecolatinos en la poesía española*, Revista de Filología Hispánica I, 1939.

¹⁶ G. de Escadón, *Los temas del 'Carpe diem' y la brevedad de la rosa en la poesía española*, Barcelona 1938.

¹⁷ Cf. Bailey, l.c.; E. Mertner, *Topos und Commonplace*, in *Strena Anglica*, Halle 1956, p. 178 ff.

¹⁸ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism, Four Essays*, Princeton 1957, p. 103.

¹⁹ E. Auerbach, *Philologie der Weltliteratur*, in: Festgabe für Fritz Strich, Bern 1952, p. 39 ff.

²⁰ J. Bailey, l.c.

²¹ *The Raghuvamsha* of Kalidasa, ed. M. R. Kale, Bombay 1925; v. 2-4.

²² H. Seidler, *Die Dichtung, Wesen-Form-Dasein*, Stuttgart 1959.

²³ R. Bachem, *Dichtung als verborgene Theologie*, Bonn 1956.

²⁴ R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, transl. from the German by J. W. Harvey, London 1959; W. F. Otto, *Gesetz, Urbild, Mythos*, Stuttgart 1951; Ernesto Grassi, *Kunst und Mythos*, Hamburg 1957.

²⁵ W. Veit, *Studien zur Geschichte des Topos der Goldenen Zeit von der Antike bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Köln 1961; *Toposforschung Ein Forschungsbericht*, Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, Jg. 37 (1963) pp. 120-163.

the sole bridge. The topos gains a new form in pietistic chiliasm. With J. J. Rousseau the proper turn is won: Golden Age and Eternal Peace are now two aspects of an eschaton which means progress. The topos retains the function of a form of thinking about temporality, but eternity is eliminated from the formula. That means: the theory of progress is an eschatology without God, the origin of which is Christian, the new tendency however unchristian. But if eternity is clearly eliminated from the inner relationship of the form of thinking, the present is then more highly estimated than before, as a time of happiness with the characteristic attribute of contentment. This is already shown in Rousseau's writings, and also in Hemsterhuis, Wieland, Kant, and the early French Socialists. What was earlier called the perfection of time, the perfection of actuality in eternity as the only location of salvation, is now called by Saint-Simon the perfection of social order, by Kant the realm of the pure practical reason, by Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin humanity and new mythology, by Winckelmann the return to antiquity, by Wieland and Gessner the imaginative force of the poet. The reason for this is to be found in the change to self-certainty of the individual which marks the beginning of the philosophy of modern times.

The analysis of the topos of the Golden Age with its attributes in Greek and Christian antiquity leaves ample room for further inquiry beyond these limits of European literature. This attempt may lead deeper into the problem, which does not confront the European mind alone. It may be a far older inheritance but unfolded in Europe in a distinctive way, the how and why of which has yet to be explained.²⁵

In this analysis we have found that philologically acquired knowledge about the tradition of a literary element makes the understanding of an epoch easier. But that is not enough. It is only through an analysis of the fundamental structure of the philosophical and literary tradition that the moving forces are made visible. For a topos can be properly understood only if—along with its tradition, its change of content, and its literary origin—its spiritual origin and its fundamental principle are also investigated.

though we are hardly competent to judge in this field, the work seems remarkable. Many of the verses contain philosophic similes of extreme subtlety and beauty which bring to mind the great comparisons of the Upaniṣads, such as *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* VIII, 323 :

"Just as when a great drum is being beaten, it is impossible to grasp the outer sounds, but by grasping the drum itself, or the beating of the drum, the sound is grasped."

which the French philosopher-poet Freddy Guthmann considered to be one of the outstanding similes of world literature. For sheer reading pleasure we feel that the experience of reading the *YVR* is similar to that of the Upaniṣads. As we understand it, the philosophy maintains that the world, when understood correctly, will be seen as consisting uniquely of "pure consciousness" which is also the reality behind each person. Often this is demonstrated by convincing a person that behind his workaday personality there remains the "witness" which is unchanging throughout the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The nature of the witness is said to be ineffable, though it is often compared to the absolute calm of deep sleep. Moreover the *YVR* has absorbed many elements from the rich tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This adds scope and even literary possibilities to a mind already supple. Small wonder that being sensitive to all the opportunities for poetry within these two philosophies, the author frequently lets his philosophy overflow into allegory, lyric effusions, even love stories, all of which bear witness to an unusual literary gift. To illustrate this talent, we have chosen one story remarkable for its style and for the brilliant twist given to an old legend.

The verses can be said to reach literary excellence in spite of their language rather than because of it. The use made of words is often clumsy; one feels that an overabundance of feelings is being expressed with tools insufficiently fine for their task, yet in some sense of a notoriously imprecise word the author was a natural genius. His images are well within the traditional mould, yet one would hesitate to apply the usual criticism of artificiality. In fact the best of these remind one of Lorca. So verse 23 invites comparison with "toque sus pechos dormidos, y se me abrieron de pronto como ramos de jacinto" (I touched her sleeping breasts and in a moment they were

A LOVE STORY FROM EIGHTH-CENTURY INDIA

lessed are the imperfect for thei

Reading the *Yogavāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇa*¹ strengthened our belief that the aesthetic impact of a literary work is often different in very interesting ways from the explicit intention of the author. In Sanskrit circles, reading beyond the author, so brilliantly used by Empson, is rare; perhaps because the faculty of close-reading a work is exhausted by the demands of textual fidelity.² Sanskrit literature, working within certain rigid boundaries, found ways of transcending them in the small details of composition that nearly always succeeded in evading the eye of the orthodox and most probably of the author himself. A very rich field awaits the literary critic who comes to Sanskrit literature equipped with a sound grasp of the language and psychoanalytic interests. The *Yogavāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇa* (YVR) would provide invaluable material for those attracted to this kind of research. It is a work of some 32,000 verses, arranged in chapters but with scarcely any order. Very little reliable information concerning its date and authorship is available. The date of composition probably falls between the 7th and 10th centuries, and the author, though traditionally held to be Vālmīki, must be termed anonymous. For reasons which are puzzling the work has received almost no attention in the West (with the exception of a small book by Helmuth van Glasenapp on the philosophy of the YVR) and, apart from B. L. Atreya's works (of very uneven quality) and a few scholarly articles on the problem of dating the text, very little serious study in India. To our knowledge, nobody has ever considered the YVR from a literary point of view.

Taken as an instance of the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta,

life, returns. Furious at what he sees, he curses both his wife and Indra. As one would expect, though Indra is king of the gods, the sage's curse is effective. This legend, with minor variations, appears again and again with the same consequence: Indra was emasculated⁴ and Ahalyā lived without feeling for a thousand years. But there is one exception, which is perhaps unique in the literature⁵ and that is the *YVR*. This becomes all the more remarkable when one considers that the story contains all the traditional elements which would lead one to expect the traditional ending: the husband is a king; he is endowed with all virtues; Dharma is invoked to sharpen the sense of wrong behaviour on the part of the lover; it is none less than the great sage Bhārata who pronounces the curse; he is enabled to do so because of his great austerities; the queen's lover is called a *śiṅga* that is an amorous dilettante; what is more, the queen and he have made no attempt to hide their illegal love. These and other similar considerations prepare us to expect an unusually unpleasant punishment. But even after they are cursed by the sage, the couple remain impenitent. They have defied society, they have defied the king, and now finally they defy the sage and make light of his curse. And in fact, even a curse of such venerable lineage, is powerless to really affect them, and they are constantly re-born as a pair of lovers. It takes a degree of courage to have written this, and pure genius to end the story with a verse suggesting that this couple's love inspired plants and trees (how much the more men and women is the commentator's interpretation) to search for love amongst themselves. The story is richly ambiguous and permits very different explanations. The philosophical interpretation that is most warranted by the doctrines of the *YVR* would be that the couple, having awakened to their "original nature" by means of their love, are now beyond any change and can only be affected at the level of appearance. So far as the couple are concerned, they remain suspended in a reality without time and so can no longer reincarnate though it may seem to others that they do so. That the tradition has read some such interpretation into the story is guaranteed by the *Laghuyoga Vāliṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa*⁶ which as might be expected, leaves out the entire last half of the story and replaces it with these words of the king, just before he bans the couple: "O all knowing Bhārata, though these two are blinded with love, their words are moving, for they have touched the essence of the highest truth."⁷

open to me like branches of hyacinth). The comparison with Lorca prompts us to utter a word of caution. There is much that is lacking in these verses; it would be difficult to find a line with the sensuous power of Lorca's "en las yemas de tus dedos, rumor de rosa encerrado" (In the tips of your fingers is contained the murmur of the enfolded rose) nor will the reader find an enthusiasm for the particular, or the quiet unphilosophic delight in the almost private details of love which one admires in much of modern poetry. But this roughness, not without its charm, suggests another element in the style which we find difficult to put into words. It has something to do with a refusal to be graceful and argues against literary sophistication with its attendant evil of bloodless urbanity and finally indifference. This feeling is heightened by our knowledge that the author is bound to be embarrassed in his excitement over the variety of this world, for surely it is a bit odd to give expression to a feeling of veneration before an acknowledged illusion. On the other hand, the very fact that he has paid abundant homage to the richness of the world throughout his poetry might explain in part his attraction to Advaita Vedānta. For if the same principle permeates the whole world, then to admire and sing this world is philosophically acceptable. In a certain sense, the conclusion of this story, remarkable as it is, follows quite naturally from the philosophy. The fact that the author is able to "snatch out of time the passionate transitory" at the same time as he is arguing equally passionately against just such a practice makes for exciting reading. It is not unusual in Sanskrit literature to find an author expounding a belief in terms of its opposite; for a man to denounce the pleasures of love and yet to describe them in elaborate detail. To be aware of such tensions in an author is surely a valid literary procedure.

The second element which we find remarkable in this story is best understood in the light of some brief background knowledge. The story is moulded around the legend of Indra and Ahalyā. Though referred to in Vedic literature the source of its appearance in later literature is probably the *Rāmāyaṇa* where the story is briefly but skilfully told.³ Indra, the god, disguises himself as the sage Gotama in order to seduce his wife, the beautiful Ahalyā. Ahalyā, though she sees through this trick⁴ is herself eager to make love with Indra and immediately accepts his proposition. As Indra is leaving the hermitage, Gotama, true to an ancient theme of literature and

The Sun told Brahman :

- 7 I have heard that long ago there lived a king of Magadha, known by the name of Indradyumna, and he was indeed like the famous Indradyumna of antiquity.
- 8 He had a lotus-eyed wife as lovely as the shadow of a soft moon. Her name was Ahalyā and she was to him as Rohi^{7b} to the moon-god.
- 9 In this city there lived also a very sensuous man,¹⁰ in fact the very king of those who delight in the passions. This man, whose name was Indra, was a Brahmin's son, gifted with a fine intelligence.
- 10 The queen Ahalyā once at a story session heard that the god Indra was infatuated with Ahalyā¹¹ (wife of the sage Gotam }
 When she heard this story, she herself fell in love with In- }
 became restless, and thought: He is infatuated with Ahal- }
 why then has he not come to me?
- 12 Even covered with lotus stalks and lying on a cool bed of banana leaves, the fever of her love burned high, and she was like an uprooted plant in the forest.
- 13 In spite of all the wealth of her husband, she was in pain and lay panting like a fish left exposed to a burning summer sun on a hot rock.
- 14 She lost control, abandoned her self-respect and and deliriously cried out: Here comes Indra, here he comes.
 A palace acquaintance, out of close friendship for the queen, felt sorry for her and said: dear friend, I will find a way to bring Indra to you.
- 16 When the queen heard the words "I will bring your beloved to you" her eyes opened in joy and she fell at the feet of her friend as one lotus bending to another.
- 17 When the day had passed, and night had come, the queen's friend went to the house of the Brahmin youth called Indra.
- 18 With great care she woke him.¹³ And in the dead of night this young girl quickly brought Indra to Ahalyā.
- 19 She put on sandal-paste and garlands of flowers, and in secluded palace-room she made love to her sensuous Indra.
- 20 This young beauty in the company of her handsome and bejewelled lover was overcome by love, as a delicate forest plant is overcome by warm spring sap.¹⁴

But this interpretation, profound as it may be, raises certain difficulties. Verse 64, where the couple finally become a "virtuous and merit-seeking Brahmin couple," as it implies that they in time saw the folly of their ways, would be incomprehensible. Secondly, all the remarks of the narrator, all his strictures, would have to be read as irony. Finally, and most important, the purpose of this story, according to the text itself, is to show the power of the mind. In fact the closing verse of the preceding chapter reads:

"A man takes the shape of whatever is firmly grounded in his mind and not of anything else. The only means to awakening somebody is by awakening his mind. I believe that it is useless to water a boulder in the hopes it will sprout leaves."⁸

on which the commentator remarks:

"That is why curses or gifts serve no purpose. The only means of warning fools of the danger of this world is to awaken their minds,"⁹ which would seem to imply that the curse given to the couple in our story was useless since it aimed at their bodies and not the state of their mind. But the further implication is that the couple are infatuated fools, and indeed the word in the next to last verse which we have translated rather loosely as "because of their deep affection" (*mohasamskārahetunā*) is literally, "because of mental predispositions arising out of their infatuation." In other words, the couple transmigrate (which is after all a state of bondage) because of their love, which therefore stands in the way of their eventual "awakening." If this interpretation is plausible, it is curious that the couple strike the impartial reader as anything but impoverished. Certainly one is meant to feel sympathetic towards them. On the other hand, how could an audience do so with impunity? This might explain why all the pandits to whom we showed the story found it "most extraordinary." Perhaps in the last analysis the ambiguity lies with the author himself. It is just possible that he is placing himself outside his own cultural environment and holding up for our admiration, if not for imitation, behaviour that deviates strongly from the usual and accepted.

But whatever elements we choose to admire in the story, few will deny that it is a document of unusual interest, with literary qualities that seem to us unquestionable.

source at all. I am now pure For what is a man but his mind?

37 I see the body as only an appearance. Even if one were to use ail weapons at once, the powerful mind could in no manner be affected.

38 Your majesty, are there any powers, of any nature, belonging to anyone, that are powerful enough to destroy the mind of those secure in their love?¹⁸

39 The mind remains the same once its beloved is obtained; the body is healthy or frail.¹⁹

40 When the mind is securely fixed on the object it desires, the pains and pleasures of the body are not capable of affecting it.²⁰

Whoever loves with depth of feeling can be certain of the eternity of his love. The body accomplishes nothing.

42 No action whatsoever, neither a great gift²¹ nor a curse, can affect what the mind deeply feels.

43 For whatever is felt deep in the heart, that no man can remove. Can frail deer move a great mountain?

My delicate-eyed darling is rooted in the jeweled centre²² of my heart, as the divine goddess is seated on the great throne of a temple.

Because I am immersed in my beloved, the saviour of my life,²³ I feel no pain, just as in the hottest of weather a mountain with a garland of rain clouds feels no discomfort.

46 Wherever I may be, whether I stand or fall, I feel nothing but union with my love.

The mind, called Indra, is joined to the mind of Ahalyā. This is only natural, for there is nothing above one's own nature.²⁴

48 Your majesty, the mind of a wise man, when it is intent on something it must do, cannot be moved by curses or by gifts, no more than could a Himalayan mountain.

49 Of course the body through such means may be moved, but a resolute mind, because it wishes to overcome, is firm.

The parts of the body are virtually useless. They are not the cause of the mind, O king. Rather it is the mind that is their cause, just as it is water that produces the sap of forest plants.²⁵

Know that in this world, mind is the primordial body. Through the mind one imagines that one possesses a body. Whatever the

She lost all interest in her husband in spite of his many virtues. Being in love, she saw the whole world as consisting uniquely of her love.

- 22 After some time the king discovered that his wife's smile which resembled the moon lighting up the heavens, was due to her love for Indra.¹⁵

- 23 For whenever she thought of Indra her mouth would open to light, like the night-lotus when it is touched by the beams of a full moon.

Indra was equally devoted to her with all the senses of his body, and could not bear to be without her for even a moment.

The king, with deep pain, learnt of their adulterous ways. For the love that existed between them was so strong that they made no attempt to hide it.¹⁶

- 26 He himself saw their attachment for one another and punished them in different ways.

On a cold autumn night they were left in smiling and happy they felt no pain.

- 28 And when the king asked them: O wicked pair, are you repentant or not? when they were taken out of the water they replied:

When we think of the blameless light that is in each of our faces we are not conscious of the pained state of our bodies.

Because we are together and have no fear of ever being parted, even in pain we are happy. We cannot be touched, though our bodies be cut in pieces.

Then¹⁷ they were burned, but they felt no pain. They remained happy in their selves and rejoiced in the memory of one another.

- 32 They were then crushed beneath the feet of elephants, but they felt no pain. Yes, they spoke always the same words in answer to the king.

They were whipped, but they felt no pain. Time and again the king devised new punishments and time and again they told him of their indestructible love.

Indra further told the king: The whole world is my beloved.

No punishment, no pain can touch me. And for her also the whole world consists of me.

That is why there can be no pain; whatever from any

of you listen! Few perceive us truly, we are subtle, for we are pure consciousness.³⁰

The Sun said

- 9 From the curse, though their minds were tightly knitted in the depths of their love, they fell to the ground like two leaves dropping from a tree.
- 10 Linked together in their lawless love³¹ they took birth as a buck and a deer. When next they were born, it was as two birds. Finally in our own age, their love for one another still strong, they were born as a virtuous Brahmin couple, intent on performing austerities.
- 12 For you see, Bharata was only able to affect their bodies with his curse, but not their love.
- 13 So even today, wherever they are born, because of their deep affection, they are born always as a couple.
- 14 Even plants and trees, seeing the depths of this love so complete its purity, thrill to their love and are filled with desire to unite.

¹ We have used the Nirnayasāgara press ed. of W. Laxman Sastri Pansikar, which contains the *Vāsisthamahārāmāyaṇatātparyaprakāśa* commentary, published in Bombay, 1937 (third edition).

² Since this article is primarily for a literary audience, we have taken certain liberties in the translation that would not be strictly in order were the article meant for a professional journal of Indology. To indicate the extent of our deviation, here is a very literal translation of the 1st verse: 'For it is heard (that) formerly, Lord, in the (land of the) Magadhas, (there was) a king, Indradyumna (by this name) was he known, (and he was) like another Indradyumna.' For the same reason we have included as few textual notes as possible and have explained certain literary conventions which sanskritists will find superfluous.

³ *Rāmāyaṇa* I, 48.

⁴ So in the critical edition and in most vulgates. However in the *Rāmāyaṇa-maṇjari* of Kṣemendra (Kāvya-mālā ed. of 1903, p. 25) perhaps because Kṣemendra was morally fastidious, Ahalyā does not realise that it is not her husband (*lakṣṇa* 'yam ityavijñāya) which leaves the curse unexplained. In any case the curse is odd, for we are never told how Gotama knew of his wife's guilt.

⁵ In order to substantiate this belief we asked two senior sanskritists, Professor Gaurinath Sastri and Professor R. C. Hazra, and found that they shared our opinion. Moreover, for fear that our judgments might have a Western bias, we asked one of the leading orthodox scholars, Professor Pattabhirama Sastri, who

- primordial body (the mind) resides in it can be expected
but from no other place.
- 52 Know it to be the original seed from which the bodies spring
like leaves on a tree. If the seed dies, the beauty of leaves can
never be. But if the leaves die, the seed lives on.
- 53 If the body is destroyed the mind has no trouble in creating
a host of new bodies, as it does in dream-land. But if the mind
is destroyed the body will wither. Therefore carefully guard
the jewel that is your mind.
- 54 King, wherever I look I see only my deer-eyed love. Whenever
I think of her I am happy. The painful punishment your men
inflict upon me, whether it be brief or eternal, I feel it not
at all.

The Sun said :

- 1 The handsome king, when he was spoken to in this manner by
Indra, turned to the sage Bharata who was sitting by his side
and he said:
- 2 Sir, you are wise in the ways of the law. I see here a very
difficult man. He has stolen my wife and yet his proud lips
speak with conviction.
- 3 Great sage, quickly curse him with a curse appropriate to his
evil, for it would be wrong for me to kill a Brahmin and yet it
would be equally wrong for me not to do so.²⁶
- 4 The greatest of the sages, Bharata, heard the king and he
thought rapidly but justly²⁷ about the sin of that wrong-acting
queen, who was guilty of betraying her husband, and of that
strange man.
He cursed them, saying: O evil-minded pair, may you both be
destroyed.
- 6 The couple quietly answered both sage and king:
It is you who are evil-minded,²⁸ and you have wasted your power
which you took such pains to acquire.²⁹
For this curse will not affect us at all. Though our bodies die,
that which is within us will not perish.
- 8 For nobody is ever able to destroy that which lies within. Both

that we
impossi
used.

¹⁶ The skt. is extremely elliptical here. The difficulty in construing the sentence is due to "*tanmukhavyomacandrikā*" which we interpret is a *hetuviśesana* giving the reason for her being discovered.

¹⁷ "nirāvaraṇaṇeṣṭayoh"—whose actions did not attempt to hide the love,—can be taken literally or more generally as we have translated.

¹⁸ The story, especially from this verse on, becomes more and more unreal and begins to wrap itself into the forms of fairy tales. Perhaps this serves to universalize the emotion, such an important procedure in Skt. literature.

¹⁹ "dr̥ṣṭāṇiścayavāntyāpi"—literally, who are secure in what they have seen, on which the commentator says "dr̥ṣṭo 'nubhūya mānas tadbhāvāpattiparyanto nīśayo dr̥ṣṭāṇiścayas tadvāntyāpi".

²⁰ "vṛddhi" may also mean "old", so that it to mean "whether the body is old and frail or not".

²¹ The *LYV* reads "bhāvaṃ bhāvāḥ śarīrothā" which confirms our interpretation of the difficult "bhāvābhāvāḥ".

²² Here the *LYV* omits "great gift" and adds "sage's curse". As they stand they hint at future events, although they are gratuitous since in the *LYV* the story ends, not with the curse and its effects, but with the king banishing the couple from his kingdom which in any case emasculates the story.

²³ The Skt. "manahkośa" can be decomposed as either "the treasure that is my heart" or "the treasure that is inside my heart".

²⁴ "jīvarakṣā" means the saving of one's life. But here it must act as an agent noun, as if it were "rakṣayitṛi".

²⁵ This is a reference to Advaita (and is one explanation of the story) where *svarūpa*—one's very nature, is defined as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*.

²⁶ As in a *Mahākāvya* at the end of a *sarga*, the metre changes to something more elaborate than the pedestrian *anuṣṭubh* which the author has been using until this point.

²⁷ Indra, being a Brahmin, is according to the law, beyond capital punishment. On the other hand, the crime is so great that the king would be equally failing in his duty were he not to punish him.

²⁸ The comments of the narrator are well in keeping with pious tradition. It is interesting that they are refuted by the words of the couple who are throughout the object of our ethical and aesthetic concern.

²⁹ Their superior moral position is sharpened by this use of the same dual vocative, *durmatī* which was used in the preceding verse against them.

³⁰ It is traditional in Skt. literature that ascetics through practising austerities, acquire a reserve of power which is quickly exhausted by something as charged as a curse.

³¹ The implication is that by means of their love, Indra and Ahalyā have become aware of their nature as being identical. (Cf. the commentary on verse 26.) "That which lies within" can be taken at a literary level to refer to their love, and at a philosophical level to refer to this conviction. The three adjectives given as the cause of their love's indestructibility, *sūkṣmatva*, *cīnmayatva* and *dūrlabhyatva* are usually applied, in Advaita philosophy, to the final reality. To use it in this context is daring, though philosophically unexceptionable.

³² "vyasanasamsaktau"—lit. linked in their attachment to pleasure, or even, linked in misfortune.

knows no English, for his opinion. After carefully going through the story he replied: "n'āsti sandehaḥ, iyam kathā atīvavaiśiṣṭhyapūrṇam". there is no doubt about it, this story is extremely unusual.

⁴The *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha* is the work of one Abhinanda, a Kashmiri, who is supposed to have lived in the 9th century. It is an abbreviation of the *YVR* using, on the whole, the same verses. In many cases however the text is simplified, or simply clarified which might indicate an earlier date for the *YVR* than is usually accepted. On the other hand, the use of Mahāyāna technical terms rules out of the question any dating earlier than the 5th or 6th century. We have used the Nirṇayasāgara press ed. of 1937 (Bombay) edited with the *Vāsiṣṭha-candrikā* commentary by Tarkavāgisvara Sāhityācārya.

⁷"bhagavan sarvadharmajñā paramārtharasasprṣaḥ
ramayantyeva cetāṃsi girāḥ kāmāndhayor api"

⁸"yadbaddhapiṭam abhito manasi prarudam
tadrupam eva puruṣo bhavatiha nānyat
tadbodhanād itaram atra kilābhyupayam
śailoudhasekam iva niṣphalam eva manye." Like many of the verses of this text, the conciseness is a bit confusing. We have construed the negative of the second line with the second half of the verse.

⁹"ataeva hi mūdānām saṃsāranivāraṇe tadbodhanam evopayo na varaśāpādir
anya ityāh."

¹⁰Rohini, wife of the moon, is a traditional symbol of matrimonial love.

¹¹The common "viṭa" (as the commentary remarks) of the dramas. One associates the viṭa-type with prostitutes, and the very appellation would tend to prejudice the reader against him, which can be seen either as an ambiguity or as a literary device. The *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha* (LVY) adds "nāgarinām priyo"—beloved of all the townswomen, which underlines his man-about-town character.

¹²Besides *Rāmāyaṇa* I, 48, those interested in this myth may consult *Mahābhārata* VII, 49; V, 12, 373; XII, 343; *Brahmapurāṇa* pūrvakhaṇḍa 87; *Śivapurāṇa* bharmakhaṇḍa 11; Hopkins in the *J. of the American Or. Soc.* XXXVI, 264; A. B. Keith, *Rel. & Phil. of the Veda*, Vol. II, p. 132; Macdonell, *Ved. Mytho.* p. 65; and finally Kane's *History of Dharmasāstra* Vol. II, p. 1145 where he gives references to the *Tantravārttikā* which interprets Indra as the sun, and Ahalyā as the night. Pandit Pattabhirama Sastri suggested the same solution.

¹³The implication is that she is unable to distinguish myth from reality since in a kind of schizophrenia she imagines that the Ahalyā of the legend is herself. It is interesting to note the ambiguity of the story even in such small details. For this could mean that she was so foolish as to fall under the spell of māyā (or a bad pun if you wish) or it could suggest that whatever the mind believes is a reality. This is more likely since one of the favourite themes of the *YVR* (it concerns at least half of the stories) is the *manorājya*,—the "mind kingdom"—which illustrates man's ability to delude himself into believing that he has external power over an area that exists exclusively in his mind. Some of these stories can be very effective, such as the one of a king who enters a sunbeam and peoples its empty spaces with figures of his own imagination over whom he then rules happily until one of his descendants is awakened to his history and thereby destroys the entire kingdom. J. Masson intends to bring out a small volume of translations of several of these stories.

¹⁴"bodhayitvā yathāyuktam" may also mean "acquainting him with the circumstances" which is the interpretation both G. Sastri and P. Sastri prefer.

¹⁵The Bombay ed. reads "ratenāvarjitā"—overcome by love,—but we have translated the better reading "rasenāvarjitā" of the Bengali ed. of the *YVR* edited by P. Tarkaratna, pub. in Calcutta, 1887. This is also the reading of a Hindi edition

The chapter on "The Krishna of Painting" is useful, and mention is made of the "great folios" of the abridged, illustrated Mahābhārata in Persian commissioned by Akbar, now in the palace library at Jaipur. "A separate volume with fourteen illustrations all concerned with Krishna is part of the great version now at Jaipur;" these have been reproduced in T. H. Hardley's book *Memorials of the Jeypore Exhibition: Volume IV, the Razm Namāh* (London, 1883). Mr. Archer reproduces two: "The Death of Balarāma" by Basawan, and "The Death of Krishna" by Mukund. The book has 39 plates in all, the others depicting scenes from the *Bhāgavata-Purāna*.

There is a small error in this work of precise and loving scholarship. In his notes (p. 117) Mr. Archer says, "It is unfortunate that Krishna's reasons for destroying the Yadava race are nowhere made very clear. The affront to the Brāhman is the immediate occasion for the slaughter but hardly its actual cause; and, it is argued that the Yādavas must first be destroyed in order to render Krishna's withdrawal from the world complete, we must then assume that the Yādavas are in some mysterious way essential parts of Krishna himself. Such a status, however, does not seem to be claimed for them and none of the texts suggests that this is so. The slaughter, therefore, remains an enigma."

Though the *Bhāgavata-Purāna* does not give the cause for the slaughter, the Mahābhārata emphatically does. Gāndhārī's curse in Book Eleven (The Weeping Women), consigns Krishna and his race to destruction, because, though a relative of the Pāndavas (his sister Subhadrā is Arjuna's wife and his father is Kunti's brother), and a profound well-wisher of the Kauravas, he did not prevent the Kurukshetra carnage:

*Yasmatparasparam ghnanto gyatayah Kurupandavah
upekshitate govinda tasmaj-gyatinvadhishyasi
tvamapyupasthite varshe shattrimshe madhusudana
hatagyatirhatamatyo hataputro vanecharah
anattavadavigyato midhanam samavapsyasi.*

(Section XXV)

[O Krishna, you could have stopped the war.
You had the tongue, you had the power.
I curse you, Krishna!

Wielder of the mace and discus,

*Thirtysix years from now,
You will slaughter your kinsmen as my sons did theirs,
As the Pāndavas did. Having slaughtered them,
You will wander in shame and die disgustfully....]*

BASHAM, A. L., *The Wonder that was India*. Grove Press, New York, 2nd Edition, 1964.

AN ANNOTATED MAHABHARATA BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note

There is no full bibliography of books in English on, and translations of, the Mahābhārata, though many histories of Indian literature (specially those by German scholars) give small lists of books in foot-notes or in Appendices. This bibliography is an attempt to fill that gap.

It arose as an ancillary activity to my English translation of the Mahābhārata. It does not pretend to be complete, though it is fairly comprehensive.

Suggestions and additions will be gratefully received. I should like to acknowledge help received from Reverend A. Huart, S.J., Librarian of St. Xavier's College, who allowed me the use of the splendid materials on Orientalia in the Goethals Library. I have also made use of the Sanskrit College and Asiatic Society libraries in Calcutta. Often, however, specially in the pursuit of specialist points, gurus and friends who prefer to remain anonymous have been more helpful than institutions.

Books in English on, and English Translation of, the Mahābhārata

ARCHER, W. G., *The Loves of Krishna*. Allen & Unwin, 1957.

Keeper of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and author of many books on Indian art including the Batsford *Indian Painting* and *Modern Indian Art*, Mr. W. G. Archer traces the Krishna story from the Upaniṣads through the Mahābhārata, the *Bhāgavata-Purāna* (the lyrical allegory of the divine cowherd flute-player and the *gopīs*), and the poems of Jayadeva (*Gīta-Govinda*), Chandi Dās, Sūrdās, Govind Dās, and Vidyāpati.

There are two essays on the Mahābhārata: "Indian and Greek Epics" by Robert Antoine, and "Comments on the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata" by George T. Artola. The first places the epics in their social and historical contexts and attempts a comparative assessment; the second is a short (and slight) presentation of the Indian epics' structure and influence.

SMET, R. and NEUNER, J. (Ed.), *Religious Hinduism*. St. Paul Publications, Allahabad, 2nd Rev. Ed., 1964.

A series of informed articles and essays by Jesuit fathers, either resident in India or Indian citizens, examining the complete fabric of Hindu religion and culture as a prelude for "a dialogue in depth and sympathy" between Hinduism and Christianity. Reverend R. Antoine writes on the Mahābhārata: his article consists largely of an admirable summary of the eighteen books.

DOWSON, JOHN, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961.

This is the tenth edition of a work by a Professor of Hindustānī who made an attempt "to supply the long-felt want of a Hindu Classical Dictionary." It appeared originally in Trubner's Oriental Series, and quickly acquired a well-deserved reputation as a dependable guide to Hindu mythology. It is an extremely satisfactory handbook to the characters in the Mahābhārata. In some respects, however, Dowson's *Dictionary* is badly out-of-date: the dramatist Bhāsa is not listed, and the only translations of the *Gītā* mentioned are those by Wilkins and J. Cockburn Thompson!

DUTT, MANMATHA NATH (Tr.), *The Mahābhārata*. Elysium Press, Calcutta, 1895-1905.

This is the second complete translation, in three volumes, of the Mahābhārata, by the Rector of Keshub Academy. It is the only one that gives a verse-by-verse rendering. Dutt follows the Kisari Mohan Gānguli version closely in many places, but is more prudish: Gānguli Latinises, Dutt omits. In Book I (*Ādi Parva*), LXIII, "slokas 50 to 52 not translated for obvious reasons," he explains; in the same book, CIV, "slokas 14 to 20 are also 'not translated for obvious reasons.'"

DUTT, ROMESH CHUNDER, *The Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata* (Condensed into English Verse). Dent's Everyman's Library, 1910, reprinted 1944.

An excellent, popular introduction to the civilization of pre-Muslim India, done with admiring affection. Professor Basham summarises the epic story, and quotes at length from a pleasing translation of the story of Nala and Damayanti.

BESWICK, ETHEL. *Tales of Hindu Gods and Heroes*. Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1960.

Miss Beswick divides her book into four parts--(1) The Cosmic God, (2) The Creative Gods, (3) The Epics, (4) Various Stories. In each she tries to present, in simple and romanticised form, the essentials of the subject for the benefit of the lay Western reader. She glosses over unpalatable material ("Very little has been said of Kālī or Durgā or of the many degrading forms of religious rites which have in so many cases sprung up in the passage of years.") Her re-telling of the Mahābhārata story in about a hundred pages retains most of the fundamental elements, and is an extremely efficient summary. Her fourth section ("Various Stories") narrates two famous legends from the Mahābhārata—Nala and Damayanti, and Sāvitrī and Satyavān.

DANIELOU,
1964.

Books, New York,

A magnificent explication of the symbolic meanings of Hindu deities and religious rituals, with an appendix of "transcriptions of the Sanskrit texts which are quoted in translation in this work." There are 102 quotations from the Mahābhārata in the book, mostly to describe gods and goddesses; along with a mass of fascinating other material, carefully dug up and superbly organised. Invaluable to any reader who wishes to make sense of the elaborate polytheism of the epic and of Hinduism in general. M. Daniélou uses two different recensions of the Mahābhārata when quoting without mentioning which he uses when, thus creating an unnecessary confusion. "I happened to have at my disposal first one version and later the other," he explains. "I did not find the time or the courage to try to co-ordinate the two versions of this enormous work, which show endless variants."

BARY, W.M. THEODORE (Ed.), *Approaches to the Oriental Classics: Asian Literature and Thought in General Education*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1959.

This volume is a record of the "proceedings of a conference held at Columbia University, September 12 and 13, 1958," to which many distinguished orientalists and teachers of Asian courses in American colleges and universities were invited. Part I consists of essays and papers on "Oriental Classics and the Teaching of the Humanities," Part II on "Some Great Books of the Oriental Traditions," and Part III on "Practical Problems in the Teaching of the Oriental Humanities."

He was brought up by a widow who worked for a Brāhmin in the Khulnā district. As a boy he would pick up coconuts thrown as offerings in the Gangā or left by the waterside, sell them, and with the money beg his foster mother to buy him books. Impressed, the Brāhmin employer put him in a school.

When he grew up, he became a bookseller in Calcutta. By 1869 he had put by enough money to buy a small printing press and start a publishing concern. By the end of 1876 he had brought out a complete Bengali translation of the Mahābhārata. Then a new idea fired him: the complete Mahābhārata in English. His purpose was to unfold the richness of the Indian heritage to the British rulers and to foreigners in general; as his widow innocently explained in her epilogue, attached to the last book in 1896, "If a knowledge of the mind of the people is of value to the administration of the country, who will deny the utility of an English translation of the Mahābhārata to the British Government of India?"

He knew his own English was not good enough; and press work kept him too busy anyway. Luck brought him Bābu Kīśari Mohan Gānguli, a man with a brilliant academic record in English; Gānguli was entrusted with the work of translating the epic while Roy went around collecting funds from "peasants and princes, Anglo-Indian officials and English and American sympathisers to warrant him in going forward"—for his ambition (in which he succeeded) was to distribute the translated volumes free. His first wife died; he married again in 1886; in 1889 he was made, by Queen Victoria, a Companion of the Order of the British Empire; he died of an undiagnosed illness on 10 January 1895. His will directed that his property be sold and the money employed for three purposes—the completion of the English Mahābhārata, the erection of a temple to Śiva in his village, and the excavation of a tank there for the use of the villagers.

Bābu Kīśari Mohan Gānguli, who, "like a literary Atlas, bore the heavy burden of the translation," gets mentioned only in the last volume of the English translation. Though he had no hand at all in the translation, Roy put his name on the title page of the first nine volumes. The ambiguity that transformed a publisher into a translator and left K. M. Gānguli's glory unsung has, to my knowledge, been spotted only by Ronald Inden and Maureen Patterson, compilers of the University of Chicago's Bibliography to South Asian Studies; by K. M. Nott in the Janus Press edition of the first two books of the Mahābhārata; and by A. C. Macdonnell in his *History of Sanskrit Literature*, where the translation is listed in the bibliography as having been published at "the expense of P. C. Roy" (it was really at K. M. Gānguli's expense!).

The "utility" was quickly noticed. Lord Dufferin sanctioned a grant of Rs. 11,000 (whose purchasing power equivalent today would be around \$20,000), and Lord Ripon gave "a handsome contribution." Sir Rivers Thompson "as pleased to sanction a grant of Rs. 5000;

R. C. Dutt was "the first of his race to attain the rank of divisional commissioner" in the Indian Civil Service; he also received the Companionship of the Indian Empire. His well-known translations of the two Sanskrit epics were finished in 1897; he wrote his "Translator's Epilogue" for the Mahābhārata version in 1898 in the University College, London. His selection of passages for translation is scrappy (he begins with the tournament where Arjuna and Karna show their skills [*Ādi Parva*] and ends with the horse sacrifice performed by Yudhiṣṭhira [*Aśvamedha Parva*], leaving out much of the *Ādi Parva* ["The Beginnings"] and the whole of the *Mausala* ["The Battle with Clubs"], *Mahā-prasthāna* ["The Great Journey"] and *Svargārohana* ["Heaven"] *Parvas*.) He defends his decision by explaining that "A poem of ninety thousand couplets is more than what the average reader can stand; and the heterogeneous nature of its contents does not add to the interest of the work. If the religious works of Hooker and Jeremy Taylor, the philosophy of Hobbes and Locke, the commentaries of Blackstone and the ballads of Percy, together with the tractarian writings of Newman, Kable, and Pusey, were all thrown into blank verse and incorporated with the *Paradise Lost*, the reader would scarcely be much to blame if he failed to appreciate that delectable compound. A complete translation of the *Mahābhārata* therefore into English verse is neither possible nor desirable. . . ."

Dutt's choice of *Locksley Hall* hexameter as the best medium for verse translation of the Mahābhārata—"the one finally adopted," he says, "was a nearer approach to the Sanskrit *Sloka* than any other familiar English metre known to me"—is delightfully if not successfully argued; the other interest is his character criticism—in the style of A. C. Bradley, a contemporary, whose *Shakespearean Tragedy* appeared in 1894—of the epic's amazing variety of men and women.

The book has a useful, though out-dated, bibliography, and an introduction by S. K. Ratcliffe; it is dedicated to "The Right Hon. Professor F. Max Müller, who has devoted his lifetime to the elucidation of the learning, literature, and religion of ancient India."

GANGULI, KISARI MOHAN (Tr.), *The Mahābhārata*. Bhārata Press, Calcutta, 1888-1896.

This complete and faithful translation—the first of the two complete renderings into English of the epic and the only edition now available—is the monumental accomplishment strangely referred to by scholars and bibliographers alike, as "the P. C. Roy translation." Behind that error is a story as intriguing as that of the identity of Shakespeare's W. H. of the Sonnets.

Pratāp Chandra Roy was born in the village of Shānko in the Burdwān district of Bengal on 15 March 1842. His father was Rāmjai Roy; his mother, Drabamai Devī, died when he was two and a half.

GOULD, F. J., *The Divine Archer*. J. M. Dent, London, 1911.
The author, in a small book (103 pages), retells, presumably for children, one story from the Rāmāyaṇa (the breaking of the bow at Sitā's svayamvara), and two from the Mahābhārata (Yudhiṣṭhira's moral examination by Yama near the pool, and the Sāvitrī episode). Gould bases both on Sir Edwin Arnold's "beautiful version" in *Indian Idylls*.

HOPKINS, E. WASHBURN, *The Great Epic of India*.
1901.

Hopkins was Professor of Sanskrit at Yale University, and his study of the epic, which appeared in the Yale Bicentennial Publications series, sets an enviably high scholastic standard. With regard to the Mahābhārata's philosophy (to which Hopkins devotes 100 pages) and prosody (160 pages), this is the last word on the subject. Every point is copiously illustrated with quotations, until the book begins to have the appearance of a closely-argued *ṭīkā* by an orthodox Sanskrit pandit. Chapter V is on "The Origin and Development of the Epic" and chapter VI on "Date of the Epic," and there is an extremely useful appendix on "Parallel Passages in the Two Epics," which lists 337 phrases selected, says Hopkins, "at haphazard, only to show the general base of epic phraseology." Hopkins' contention is that "The Pāṇḍu-Epic, in its present form, was composed after the Greek invasion" (circa 400 B.C.).

HORRWITZ, ERNST, *A Short History of Indian Literature*.
Unwin, London, 1907.

In this compact, extremely useful introduction to the history of Indian literature, which carries a preface by Rhys Davids, Horrwitz addresses himself "to the general reader who knows nothing or little of Eastern thought. . . . This little book is complete in itself, and the text can be easily understood even without consulting the footnotes." Chapter IV describes the events leading to Kurukṣetra war, and Chapter V discusses "The Origin of the Mahābhārata." The author's note promises: "second part which is in preparation will deal with the Hindu Theatre."

MACDONELL, ARTHUR A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*. Munshi
Rām Manohar Lāl, Delhi, 1958.

This is an Indian reprint of a well-known history whose fourth edition went out of print in 1913. Macdonell was Boden Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford when the book first appeared (in 1900); the chapters on Vedic literature are excellent, but the epics get casual treatment, and the chapter on Sanskrit drama is disgracefully scrappy. The bibliographies attached to each chapter are thorough and most helpful. But there is little original or organised comment on the Mahābhārata in the chapter devoted to the epic.

Sir Auckland Colvin gave Rs. 2,000 when he was appointed the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces; Sir Alfred Croft granted Rs. 5,000. The official list is augmented with American scholars and benefactors—Professor Lanman, Professor Maurice Bloomfield of Hopkins University, and others.

But K. M. Gānguli's was entirely a labour of love. "My husband scarcely exaggerated the truth," wrote P. C. Roy's widow, "when he used to say that... he was only the hand that did the work while Bābu Kīśari Mohan was the head that directed it. While lying on his death bed, he earnestly appealed to Bābu Kīśari Mohan to complete the undertaking. With tears in his eyes, Bābu Kīśari Mohan readily gave the assurance that was solicited, saying that he would not, on any account, give up the work."

It is, even by twentieth century standards, a splendid piece of dedicated work. The translation reads smoothly, and the translator's notes indicate the meticulous care he took to compare different recensions and to consult the various commentaries (he greatly favours Nilakantha's). The supreme irony is that the K. M. Gānguli translation, now re-issued from Calcutta's Oriental Press in 9 volumes, nowhere mentions his name, but openly credits P. C. Roy as "translator and publisher" on the title page of each volume.

In his "Translator's Postscript," at the end of Volume XI (1896), Gānguli explains that "Roy was against anonymity. I was for it." He was afraid no one person could finish "the whole of the gigantic work." "It was, accordingly, resolved to withhold the name of the translator." But hardly a fourth of the work had been accomplished when "an influential Indian journal came down upon poor Pratāpa Chandra Roy and accused him openly of being a party to a great literary imposture"—that of posing as "the translator of Vyāsa's work when, in fact, he was only the publisher." Gānguli continues: "Now that the translation has been completed, there can be no longer any reason for withholding the name of the translator. The entire translation is practically the work of one hand." Chāru Chandra Mookerjee helped with portions of the *Ādi* and *Sabhā Parvas*; "about four forms of the *Sabhā Parva* were done by Professor Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya."

GHOSHAL, U. M., *A History of Indian Political Ideas*. Oxford University Press, 1959.

This work of painstaking scholarship is the only one of its kind. Dr. Ghoshāl subjects the *Mahābhārata*'s *Śanti* (Peace) and *Anuśāsana* (Advice) *Parvas* to a meticulous 70-page examination and emerges with a lucid presentation of the principal political ideas and theories in the epic. Both "straight wisdom" and "crooked wisdom" (as recommended in the epic) are carefully analysed.

of being burnt together with the husband to the eldest and only lawful wife").

MULLICK, PROMATHA NATH (Rai Bahadur), *The Mahābhārata as a History and a Drama*. Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1939.

In a long (407 pages), loosely organised book (in spite of its clear title), Rai Bahadur Mullick discusses the epic story and its background with sincere but diffuse enthusiasm. This volume is a companion to the author's earlier *The Mahābhārata, As it Was, Is, and Ever shall Be*, and, like it, finds many parallels between the ethics of Vālmiki and those of the New Testament.

In his Introduction, Sir Sarvepalli Rādhākrishnan says, "It will be a mistake to lay all the stress on the warlike or athletic aspects of the *Mahābhārata* for it speaks to us of the vast eternal background against which wars are lost or won, and kingdoms perish or survive," and recommends Rai Bahadur Mullick's book because the author "believes that a book which has fashioned the destiny of a large section of people must have some essential lessons for us."

There are nine illustrations, two from the library of the Mahārājā of Jaipur ("The Maze, or Chakra-Formation of Drona" and "The Great Feast Before the Horse Sacrifice"), both part of the series commissioned by Akbar for the Persian translation of the *Mahābhārata* called the *Razm-namāh*. The other seven "were specially made under the direction of the author."

NARASIMHAN, G. V. (Tr.), *The Mahābhārata: An English Version based on Selected Verses*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1965.

Done during time taken off from his exacting work as Under Secretary of the United Nations, Mr. Chakravarthi V. Narasimhan's 216-page version of the *Mahābhārata* was prepared for the Columbia College Programme of Translations from the Oriental Classics. Workmanlike and readable (though not in contemporary idiom), it is the only one that takes advantage of the Poona Bhandārkar text (for nine books; the P. C. Roy text is used for the rest).

By sticking to his purpose of giving "a straightforward narrative account of the main theme of the epic: the rivalry between the Pāndavas and the Kauravas," Mr. Narasimhan forsakes the poetic beauties of the epic in favour of the hard core story. An appendix lists the verses selected as the basis for this very free "translation". The glossary has brief explanations of the Sanskrit names, and in his introduction Mr. Narasimhan summarises the epic narrative and adds short appreciations of the important characters.

Kīśari Mohan Gānguli, in his translated English version, translated the franker portions of the epic—those dealing specifically with sexual details—into Latin; M. N. Dutt omitted them altogether, with a note

MAJUMDAR, R. C. (General Editor), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*. Vol. II (*The Age of Imperial Unity*). Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan, Bombay, 1951.

Dr. M. A. Mehendāle discusses the historical importance of the epics in Chapter XVI of the second volume of a newly-written ten-volume history of India. "It is now generally accepted," he says, "that the great battle between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas was a historical event which occurred some time between 1400 and 1000 B.C."

MONIER-WILLIAMS, MONIER, *Indian Wisdom, Or Examples of the Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Doctrines of the Hindus: With a Brief History of the Chief Departments of Sanskrit Literature, and some Account of the Past and Present Condition of India, Moral and Intellectual*. W. H. Allen, London, 2nd, Edition, 1876.

An extremely lucid book that gives a "good general idea of the character and contents of Sanskrit literature." It consists of fifteen lectures—the spoken quality gives the book its great readability—delivered in the course of Monier-Williams' "official" duties as Boden Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford. Lecture XIII is devoted to a summary (with a few translated passages) of the Mahābhārata; the footnotes are extremely illuminating. Lecture XII does the same with the Rāmāyaṇa, and Lecture XIV is "The Indian Epics compared with each other and with the Homeric Poems."

MONIER-WILLIAMS, MONIER, *Story of Nala (An Episode of the Mahābhārata)*. Oxford University Press, 1860.

Monier-Williams provides the Sanskrit text, "with a copious vocabulary, grammatical analysis, and Introduction," and the Very Reverend Henry Hart Milman, Dean of St. Paul's has a "metrical translation" (in trochee hexameter with a caesura) of the Nala and Damayantī episode alongside the Sanskrit text.

MULLER, MAX, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature (so far as it illustrates the primitive religion of the Brāhmaṇs.)* Williams & Norgak, London, 2nd Rev. Ed., 1860.

There is not much on the Mahābhārata in this admirable study, and what little there is, is devoted to wondering how the five Pāṇḍava brothers, "who, if we are to believe the poet, were versed in all the sacred literature, grammar, metre, astronomy, and law of the Brāhmaṇs," could have been guilty of polyandry when the Brāhminic law was plain: "There are many wives to a husband, but not many husbands to a wife" (veda-apyevam shrūyate ekasya bahvyo jāyā bhavanti/naikasya eva bahavaḥ patayaḥ saṁti), and how Pāṇḍu, again in violation of Brāhminic law, had two wives ("The law does not prohibit polygamy, but it regards no second marriage as legal, and it reserves the privilege

Onam was Professor of Natural History in the Government College Lahore, and his summaries of the two epics are efficient and vigorous. He makes constant use of K. M. Gānguli's translation of the Mahābhārata (which had appeared in 1889, and which, like many others, he attributes mistakenly to P. C. Roy, though Roy was only the sponsor and publisher). He also makes use of other sources, particularly the first volume of Talboys Wheeler's *History of India*, which, following a translation of the Mahābhārata in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal supposed to have been done by H. H. Wilson, describes the death of Duryodhana in a version daringly different from the orthodox recension.

The book has seven illustrations, the frontispiece being a Moghul miniature, printed in colour in Paris, showing the gambling match between the Pāndavas and Kauravas; three appendices retell in brief compass the story of the Gītā, the churning of the ocean, and Nala and Damayantī; and two interesting notes discuss the date of the epics compilation, and the translation of the Mahābhārata into Persian commissioned by the Moghul Emperor Akbar (a contemporary of Elizabeth I), and reported, says Onam, "from the standpoint of a bigoted Muslim," by the historian Abdul Kādir Badauni, in *Tārīkh-i-Badauni*. The translation was called Razm-namāh (Book of the Wars), and the Preface was by Akbar's biographer Shaikh Abul Fazl ("God defend us," says Badauni, "from his infidelities and absurdities.") The translation was begun in 1582 and probably finished in 1588; it was ordered because, says Abul Fazl, "having observed the fanatical hatred prevailing between Hindus and Muslims, and convinced that it arose only from their mutual ignorance, the enlightened monarch wished to dispel the same by rendering the books of the former accessible to the latter."

PEZNER, NORMAN A., *Nala and Damayanti*. A. M. Philpot, London, 1926.

Pezner, who edited Somadeva's *Kathā-sarīt-sāgara* (The Ocean of Story), narrates the Nala and Damayanti story with great lyrical charm and delicacy. There are ten exquisite miniatures in the Persian style by P. Zenker painted specially for this handsomely produced edition, which was limited to a thousand copies in England and America. Extremely useful is the Appendix, which has notes on various Sanskrit words "for the reader who knows practically nothing of Sanskrit literature or mythology."

PONSOT, MARIE (Tr.), *Tales of India: Magical Adventures of Three Indian Princes*. Golden Press, New York, 1961.

This lavishly-produced book of tales "selected from the Mahabharata

defending the moral value of his decision, in his "complete" translation. Mr. C. V. Narasimhan omits them also. In attempting to retain the old-world flavour, Mr. Narasimhan in places unnecessarily slips into awkward rhetoric and archaism ("O King, I shall now dispel, once and for all, your apprehension lest some one may again challenge you to a gambling game!"; "O Lord, console them with soothing words fraught with truth!"; "Availing yourself of that opportunity, and warned by a sign that I will make beforehand, you should slay him when he is in that difficult situation.")

NARAYAN, R. K., *Gods, Demons, and Others*. Heinemann, 1964.
Re-telling of legends from the āmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata by a popular Indian novelist in the English language.

NOTT, S. C. (Ed.), *The Mahābhārata : Selections from Ādi Parva and Sambhā (sic) Parva*. The Janus Press, London, 1956.

"This volume is the first of four to be published at intervals," says the announcement on the jacket. "Though each may be considered as complete in itself, the four will form a set, and the story of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus will be carried on, in an abridged form, to the end." The other three volumes have not appeared yet. This volume (consisting of the first two books of the epic) is selected, edited and transcribed from Kīṣari Mohan Gāṅguli's complete translation of the Mahābhārata in 1883. Mr. Nott provides a preface and useful glossary of names (acknowledging Dowson's *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* and Garrett's *Classical Dictionary of India* as his major sources). The Appendix consists of comments, mostly laudatory, on the epic by A. R. Orage, taken from his book *The New Age*. The undistinguished line drawings, by Kate Adamson, "were done with the help and advice of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum." The proof-reading of Sanskrit names is atrocious.

ONAM, JOSEPH CAMPBELL, *The Great Indian Epics : The Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata*. George Bell & Sons, 1894.

Quoting from Prevost-Paradol's *Essai sur l'histoire universelle*,

"Every race has in its history one grand achievement on which it hangs all its past and all its future: and the memory of which is a rallying cry and a pledge of prosperity. The Exodus, the Jews would say, the overthrow of the Medes, would the Persians say—the Median wars, the Greeks in their turn say. These will be recalled on all occasions to furnish arguments, political claims, rhetorical effects, patriotic encouragement in great crises, and in the end imperishable regrets."

Onam says that "for the Indian people it is the great war ending with Kurukshetra, which is the central event of their history. It closes for them their golden age. Before that was a world of transcendent knowledge and heroic deeds; since then intellectual decay and physical degeneracy."

country, and founder, in his eighties in 1960, of the Swatantra (Freedom) Party.

His version of the Mahābhārata is the work of a practical moralist (he has a book on Marcus Aurelius). In 1943, he decided "to employ some of the scanty leisure of a busy life" to cover the Mahābhārata narrative in a series of 107 stories designed for Tāmil children. The re-telling was done for the Tāmil weekly *Kalki*, and the first story dealt with Śiśupāla. Later he Englished these stories, a "substantial part" of the translation from Tamil being done by two "kind friends," P. Śeshādri and S. Krishnamūrti. "Every sentence had for me a fragrance of the living past. This quality can never be preserved or brought out in an English translation."

This English version of a Tāmil re-telling is sometimes mistaken for a translation from Vyāsa's Sanskrit. The stories are efficiently told, but—like all children's Rāmāyaṇas and Mahābhāratas in India, including the famous Bengali ones of Rāmānanda Chatterjee—heavily edited, "disinfected," and prettified. Little is left to the imagination, and too many obvious explanatory adjectives ("harsh words," "aggressive vanity," "hard discipline," "perverse flouting," "deeply agitated," "quaking hearts," "spellbound silence," "wily stratagems," and so on) tend to block the steady epic flow.

RAMAN, A. S., *Tales from Indian Mythology*. Kutub-Popular, Bombay, 1961.

With an expansive imagination, Mr. Rāman, editor of a popular illustrated Indian weekly, re-tells eleven peripheral myths and legends from the Mahābhārata, and one that is a part of the hard core narrative ("The Birth of Karna"). The eleven are: "The marriage of Pārvatī," "Sāvitrī's Triumph," "The Childhood of Sitā" (the entire Rāmāyaṇa story is included in the Mahābhārata), "Kāveri and Agastya," "The birth of Krishna," "Yama and Mārkaṇḍeya," "Devyānī and Sarmisṭhā," "The Fall of Nahūsha," "Gangā and Shāntanu," "Indra and Ahalyā," and "Tāpati and Saṃvarṇa."

In his foreword, Dr. S. Rādhākṛishnan says, "This book, written with a nervous refinement of style, will be a great boon to all those who suffer from cultural illiteracy." A single sentence comment in a letter to the author by C. Rājagopālachārī, reproduced on the back jacket, says: "You have put my Mahābhārata into (*sic*) the shade."

RAPSON, E. J. (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I*. Cambridge University Press, 1922.

J. Rapson was Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Cambridge, and for this volume he engaged the services of many distinguished Sanskritists, among them A. Berriedale Keith, L. D. Barnett, and F.

(sic)" is meant for children; it is printed in Italy and has splendid colour illustrations by Sergio Rizzato. But, whatever else it may be, translation it is not, and the distorted enbroideries and fanciful alterations of Marie Ponsot on the epic's legends and myths are often grotesquely misleading. The Kaurava and Pāndava are turned into six princes (Durio, Iudistira, Adjuna, Dussas, Bimas, and Carna); Kunti is made "Khati", and Parashara becomes "Paric", Damayanti "Damiti".

One illustration has Arabic characters on a throne, and another shows a stone image of the Buddha! The stories suffer worse mutilation.

RAGHAVAN, V., *The Mahābhārata* (Condensed in the Poet's own words). G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, 1935.

An extremely helpful, low-priced, pocket-sized paperback with the Sanskrit text and a closely literal English translation side by side. This book appeared first in 1935, quickly ran into four editions, and since then has mysteriously stayed out of print. The selections from Vyāsa's original were made by Pandit A. M. Śrīnivāsachariar ("it is easy," says the foreword, "to criticise the result and express one's surprise at the omission of certain passages and the inclusion of others"). The translation is by Dr. V. Rāghavan, an acknowledged authority on Sanskrit literature. "Every effort has been made to render the English translation both faithful and readable ... Such 'frequents' as *tada* (then), *tataḥ* (afterwards) and *tatra* (there), except where they definitely contribute to the sense—these are left untranslated." Though it over-colours the religious element in the epic and plays down the narrative,

r. Rāghavan's *Mahābhārata* does not emasculate the original: it retains all the casual, precise beauty of nature description, and the unembarrassed statement of intimate biological detail.

There is a useful "Index to the Proper Names Occurring in the Text," and a concise note on "The Message of the *Mahābhārata*" by the translator ("Nothing less than Truth and Right, Satya and Dharma, form the theme of the great epic"). The President of the Indian Republic, S. Rādhākṛishnan, then a Professor, contributes a Foreword in which he interprets the *Mahābhārata* as an attempt to illustrate the truth that "the mystery of life is a creative sacrifice".

RAJAGOPALACHARI, C., *Mahābhārata*. Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan, Bombay, 1951.

The *Mahābhārata* of "Rājāji" (as the elder statesman is affectionately addressed in India) has proved to be extremely popular in this cheap, paperback edition (58,000 copies in four years, 1951-55). "Rājāji" has played a significant role in India's political life: he was associated with Mahātmā Gāndhī in the Civil Disobedience movement against the British, was Chief Minister of Madras, Governor of West Bengal, Home Minister of India, the first Indian Governor-General of the

evinced by a large number of my foreign friends" in Indian philosophy and culture. Mr. Roy attempts to satisfy that interest by presenting them with a condensed re-telling of "the literary monster," the Mahābhārata of 100,000 slokas. There is an introduction and a glossary of Indian terms, but the style of the author, who at the time of publication was a Member of Parliament, is utterly undistinguished.

ROY, DWIJENDRA CHANDRA (Compiler), *Tales from the Mahābhārata*. Bhārat Kāryalaya, Calcutta, 2nd Edition, 1912.

A collection of seventeen stories (including those of Upamanyu, Uśinara, Gautama and Mudgala), taken from the Kisari Mohan Ganguli translation of the Mahābhārata, and revised and re-told for children. The compiler's wife was the grand-daughter of Pratāpa Chandra Roy, the sponsor and publisher of the Gānguli translation. Dwijendra Roy wrongly credits P. C. Roy with the translation. There is a long Preface by F. J. Gould, "lecturer and demonstrator for the Moral Education League."

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA and CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD, *The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gītā*. The New American Library, New York, 9th Edition, 1962.

This popular, readable translation of the *Gītā* section in the Bhīṣma Parva of the Mahābhārata contains a useful ten-page note on "Gītā and Mahābhārata," explaining the rôle of the *Gītā* in the epic.

VORA, DHAIRYABALA P., *Evolution of Morals in the Epics (Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa)*. Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1959.

"Unlike the Vedic era," says Dr. Vora in his preface, "the Epic period has not attracted the scholars of Indian history and culture; and yet the age of Epics, in the history of India, represents an era to which can be traced the origin and evolution of the Hindu concept of morality." *Evolution of Morals* is a work of great scholarship, and Dr. Vora gives copious references in support of his contentions while discussing promiscuity, polyandry, premarital sex relations, fidelity in wedlock, marriage taboos, and the status of women. There are also chapters on the caste system, the theory of Karma, and a long account of "ethical development," in the Mahābhārata, which includes an interesting bit on the practice of meat-eating in the epic period.

WHEELER, J. TALBOYS, *The History of India. (Vol. I: The Vedic Period and the Mahābhārata)*. N. Trubner & Co., London, 1867.

This extraordinary out-of-print history, summarising the Mahābhārata in 576 pages, has itself an extraordinary history. Talboys Wheeler was Assistant Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, and Secretary to the Indian Record Commission. With the

Washburn Hopkins (who writes on the Śūtras and the epic poems). In Chapter XI, Professor Hopkins does an admirable study of the two epics, stressing the Mahābhārata; his account of the social life mirrored in the epic is compact, lucid, and informative, and his analysis of the family conflict shows much psychological perceptivity: "The cousins called Pāndus first excited the jealousy of the Kurus when the latter were obliged to come south and after tokens of submission to the Pāndu King Yudhiṣṭhira, who had crowned himself as emperor and performed the horse-sacrifice (not the horse-sacrifice, *āsvamedha*, but the *rājasūya* is presumably meant) establishing this title. The somewhat uncouth Pāndus, who are described as good examples of *nonveaux riches*, flaunting in the eyes of their guests all the evidence of their wealth and making the lowly but aristocratic Kurus objects of ridicule, despite their sudden rise to power were not yet adepts in courtly arts"

REED, ELIZABETH A., *Hindu Literature; or the Ancient Books of India*. S. C. Griggs & Co., Chicago, 1891.

After tracing the development of Sanskrit literature from the Vedas to the Upaniṣads, Elizabeth Reed, who was a member of the Philosophical Society of Great Britain, re-tells some of the important parts of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. For the latter, she depends largely on Talboys Wheeler's first volume of *History of India*. The last chapters discuss the Purāṇas and the cult of Krishna.

RICE, EDWARD P., *The Mahābhārata: Analysis and Index*. Oxford University Press, 1934.

"The multifariousness of the contents of the epic," says the Reverend Edward P. Rice in his Preface, "makes it difficult to locate any particular incident, legend or discussion of which one is in search ... What has been needed is a map of this jungle—a plan of paths and by-ways through it." For the average reader, this book is the best concise Mahābhārata-map in English, surpassed only by the late Dr. Jacobi's magnificent German *Index*; it should, however, be supplemented by Sorensen's comprehensive Mahābhārata Concordance.

An Index of names and subjects in the Mahābhārata is included; the precise and enormously helpful references are to Manmatha Nāth Dutt's three-volume English translation. There is an introductory chapter called "The Universe of Being," describing the metaphysical conceptions embodied in the epic. The brief Foreword—a ten-line paragraph by L. O. Barnett, translator of Mahendravarman's Sanskrit one-act play, *Matta-vilāsa-Prahasana*—describes the book justly as "an admirable piece of careful and scholarly work."

ROY, BIREN, *The Mahābhārata*. D. K. Mukherji, Calcutta, 1958.

"This book is the result," says the author's preface, "of the interest

Mr. Dickens' novel 'The Old Curiosity Shop', Quilp, the evil character of the story, purchases an old wooden figure of an Admiral, to represent Kit, whom he hates; and he strikes and mutilates the image accordingly. The incident is true to human nature. . . . A mob will in like manner burn the effigy of the object of their destruction." (p. 363).

"The story of the young Prince who had a thousand girl wives, all exactly sixteen years of age, and all sporting together with their husband in a beautiful garden, is a curious exaggeration of the Oriental idea of happiness, in which women are regarded as objects of desire rather than as objects of affection." (pp. 417-418).

Wheeler even makes the utterly untenable suggestion that a part of the story of Duryodhana was "borrowed from the Korān." This would place the composition of some parts of the Mahābhārata to the eighth century A.D.!

ZAEHNER, R. C., *Hinduism*. Oxford University Press, 1962.

This concise introduction to Hinduism by the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics in the University of Oxford is published in the Home University Library of Modern Knowledge series. Lucidly and pleasantly written, it aims at providing the lay reader with a reasonably detailed, critical account of the main aspects of Hinduism, and the chapter divisions are organised on that basis ("Veda," "Brahman," "Moksha," "Good," "Dharma," "Bhakti"). The last chapter, "Yudhiṣṭhira Returns," is a carefully argued comparative presentation of Gandhian dharma, with Gandhi personified as a twentieth century Yudhiṣṭhira. The chapter "Dharma" fascinatingly discusses the ethics of the Mahābhārata in terms of a conflict between Yudhiṣṭhira's private conscience and his obedient acceptance of Brāhminical doctrines (and Krishna's not-always-straight advice). The importance of the concept of Karma in the epic is well analysed.

One small error creeps into this excellent bird's-eye survey: Professor Zaehner twice mentions the exile of "thirteen years" of the Pāṇḍavas, and the "one more year they have to live in concealment." But Sukuni in the *Sabhā-Parva* (Book II: The Assembly) specifically says "dvādaśha vatsaran" (twelve years) with the thirteenth ("trayodasham") year to be spent incognito.

Other Helpful Books

AUROBINDO, ŚRI, *Vyāsa and Vālmiki*. Pondichery Ashrama, 1956.

BESANT, ANNIE, *The Story of the Great War*. Madras, 1930.

BHANDARKAR, D. R., *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*. Bombay, 1940.

BOUQUET, A. C., *Hinduism*. London, 1948.

official posts he combined an amateur (but profound interest) in history, and published, among other volumes, the well-known *The Geography of Herodotus*.

He projected a three-volume history of India, the first to deal with the Vedic and the *Mahābhārata* period, the second "to exhibit the traditions to be found in the Rānāyana," and the third "to be drawn from the more salient points in Sanskrit and Mussalmān literature." The whole would "thus form a resumé of the History of India from the earliest period to the rise of British power." The project eventually developed into a five-volume history. Wheeler realized very early the gigantic nature of the work involved in the first volume: digesting the *Mahābhārata* to manageable proportions would probably, he confesses, "have proved to be the labour of a lifetime." A curious bit of luck favoured him. On going through the library catalogue of the newly founded Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta, he noticed an entry under the heading of Bhagavad-Gītā, and sent in a slip for its requisition. To his "surprise and gratification," he received a manuscript whose paper was much "embrowned by age" and seeming "to have been at least fifty years in existence." Very illegibly written, it was actually "a manuscript translation of the more important parts of the *Mahābhārata*, which was lodged in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal many years ago, and which there is reason to believe was drawn up by the late Professor H. H. Wilson." It had apparently been placed under the heading of *Gītā* by mistake. He had it copied and indexed in "nine volumes folio" (which are still in the Calcutta library), and used it as the basis of his historical study.

He was also helped by a young Sanskrit scholar, Baboo Obenāsh Chunder Ghose, who supplied "oral translations of such portions of the poem as had been omitted from the manuscript in question, together with many popular interpretations of the ancient story which are given by the Pundits to their Native audiences."

Some idea of Wheeler's precise and painstaking work may be had from knowledge of the fact that the "Contents" alone takes up 72 pages, listing in detail all the main incidents in the narrative, and the "Index" (41 pages in double column, microscopic 6 pt.) lists each character's exploits and each subject's aspects with truly incredible thoroughness. There are, in addition to a readable text that serves both as explication and critical commentary on the summarised portions of the *Mahābhārata*, marginal synopses on each page; and a great deal of Wheeler's charm lies in his unwittingly witty, indignantly unfunny, and tangentially illuminating footnotes. He is not above such remarks as:

"As for the myth of the five Pāndavas being five Indras, it is simply trash." (p. 134).

"Duryodhana is said to have made an iron image of Bhima to try his strength upon it; or he may have made an ordinary figure-head to knock about as a manifestation of his hatred toward the original. In

ictionaries useful for Explanations of Names and Places in The Mahābhārata

- ĀPTE, V. S., *The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Motilāl Banārsīdāss, Delhi, 1963. (Has an invaluable section on Sanskrit prosody).
DEVASTHILAI, JOSHI and KULKARNI, *The Students New Sanskrit Dictionary*. Keshav Bhikaji Dhawale, 2nd Edition, 1955.
MONIER-WILLIAMS, MONIER, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Oxford, New Edition, 1963. (The most exhaustive dictionary into English full of illuminating references based on a study of comparative philosophy).

Important Sanskrit Recensions of the Mahābhārata

- (1) The Calcutta edition, published by P. C. Roy, 4 volumes, 1834-39.
- (2) The Bombay edition, 1863.
- (3) The Madras edition, re-edited with ११
1890.
- (4) The Southern Recension, critically edited by P. P. S. Shastri, and published by Rāmaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, Madras, 1932.
- (5) The Poona Recension (popularly called the "Bhandārkar edition") 1927-65, easily the most authoritative, a painstaking labour of scholarly love.

- BUEHLER and KRISTE, *Indian Studies, Contributions to the History of the Mahābhārata*. London, 1892.
- HARLU, P. ANUNDA, *Virtue's Triumph, or the Mahābhārata*. Calcutta, 1894.
- ELIOT, CHARLES, *Hinduism and Buddhism*. London, 2nd Edition, 1948.
- FARQUHAR, J. N., *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India*. Oxford, 1920.
- FAUSBOLL, V., *Indian Mythology, According to the Mahābhārata in Outline*. Oriental Religious series, Luzac, Vol. I, 1903.
- GAJENDRAGADAKAR, S. N., *Studies in Mahābhārata Si iles*. (Unpublished thesis).
- GOKHALE, B. G., *A History of Indian Culture*. Asia, 1952.
- GUERBER, H. A., *The Book of the Epic*. Harrap, 1919.
- HASTINGS, R., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Edinburgh, volumes, 1908-20.
- HELD, G. H., *The Mahābhārata*. Amsterdam, 1935.
- HOLTZMANN, A., *Das Mahābhārata*. Gottingen, 4 volumes, 1922.
- HOPKINS, E. W., *Epic Mythology*. Strassburg, 1915.
- HOPKINS, E. W., *The Religions of India*. Boston, 1895.
- JACOB, H., *Mahābhārata, Inhaltsangabe*. Bonn, 1903.
- JOHNSON, FRANCIS, *Readings from the Mahābhārata*. London, 1855.
- KEITH, A. BERRIEDALE, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*. Oxford, 2nd Edition, 1958.
- MAJUMDAR, B. C., *Phallus Worship in the Mahābhārata*. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1907.
- MONIER-WILLIAMS, MONIER, *Hinduism*. Calcutta, 1877.
- MONIER-WILLIAMS, MONIER, *Indian Epic Poetry*. London, 1863.
- RADHAKRISHNAN, S., *Indian Philosophy*. London, 2 volumes, 1934.
- RAGHAVAN, V., *The Indian Heritage*. Bangalore, 2nd Edition, 1958.
- RENOU, LOUIS, *Religions of Ancient India*. London, 1953.
- SORENSEN, S., *Index to Names in the Mahābhārata, with short Explanations and a Concordance*. Delhi, 2nd Edition, 1963.
- ŚARMA, D. S., *A primer of Hinduism*. Madras, 1927.
- VAIDYA, CHINTAMANI VINAYAKA, *The Mahābhārata : criticism*. Bombay, 1905.
- VAIDYA, CHINTAMANI VINAYAKA, *Epic India; or India, As Described in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa*. Bombay, 1907.
- WHEELER, J. TALBOYS, *The Vedic Period and the Mahābhārata*. London, 1867.
- WILSON, H. H., *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*. London, 1862.
- WINTERNITZ, M., "Ganesha in the Mahābhārata," in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1898.
- WINTERNITZ, M., "Notes on the Mahābhārata," in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1897.

historical approach: "Valéry, after Goethe, noted that 'Lion is made of assimilated sheep.' No historical study, however comparative it may call itself, will ever explain the transformation of sheep into lion." Any comparative study of literature must take into account the aesthetic element, *la part du beau*. But in order to reconcile 'the archivists and the aesthetes,' Prof. Etiemble proposed 'the comparative study of structures' (style, prosody, etc.), which might lead to a new formulation of international *genres*—a classification of their invariables without which for instance a novel could not be called a novel (and Prof. Etiemble made it quite clear that he thought certain modern novels could not be called novels!). We are reminded of G. Woodberry in the first issue of the *Journal of Comparative Literature*: 'the comparative method is the mother of all classicism.' In general the Conference seemed to agree that a dry factual approach to literature is out-moded, and the new attitude was summed up by István Söter in his closing address: 'It has become quite evident that literary phenomena—which we cannot understand without an analysis of social and economic forces—also require an explanation from within the literary process itself. Literature does not depend entirely on social causes, but among others on literary causes as well' (his italics).

One of the problems dealt with in plenary session at Budapest was the 'Formation and Transformation of Literary terms'—the definition and application of terms like baroque, mannerism, romanticism, etc. Inevitably this brought up the problem of periodisation, for these aesthetic categories are applied historically (a baroque period follows the Renaissance, classicism follows baroque, etc.). The two main speakers, Tudor Vianu of Bucharest and Hans Mayer of Leipzig, were mainly concerned to show the confusion into which our use of literary terms has fallen, a confusion echoed by speakers in the subsequent discussion. Tudor Vianu revealed the diverse origins of these terms—from royal chronology (Elizabethan, Victorian), from cultural history (Renaissance), from philosophy (Enlightenment), from architecture (Gothic), from painting (Impressionism), from particular movements (*Sturm und Drang*), manifestoes (Naturalism, Symbolism), individual authors (Marinism), and so into the chaos of Modernism. Kings represent styles, and schools become movements, realism becomes synonymous with classicism, classicism is partly pre-romanticism, romantic decadence is a return to classicism, and, as Hans Mayer pointed out, anti-Romantics like Büchner and

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN EASTERN EUROPE

THE Budapest Conference, held in October 1962, marked a turning point in the history of Comparative Literature. During the Stalinist period Comparative Literature had been denounced as yet another form of bourgeois cosmopolitanism, but since the death of Stalin its influence has been steadily growing: the Budapest Conference 'Comparative Literature in Eastern Europe' finally established its official respectability. Furthermore, although the Conference was predominantly attended by East European and Soviet comparatists, a number of Western participants were also invited, and emphasis was laid on co-existence. René Etiemble made his usual vigorous attack on national self-centeredness, quoting Karl Marx in his favour: 'Narrow-mindedness and national exclusivism are becoming more and more impossible; starting from innumerable national and even provincial literatures, a universal literature is being formed from now on'—and there, added Prof. Etiemble, is a marxist foundation for Comparative Literature 'which purifies it of any taint of cosmopolitanism.' Finally the Conference resolved '...that marxist literary science cannot do without the comparative method,' and appealed for a widening of research and greater assistance.

Another encouraging feature of the Conference was its playing down the differences between East and West. Naturally the Eastern marxist approach prefers a deterministic socio-historical method, which is contrasted with the formalist 'aesthetic' approach of the Americans. But this approach is no longer uniquely American: impelled by the persuasive fervour of Prof. Etiemble, it has gained considerable ground in France, where the historical study of influences was previously dominant (J. M. Carré, etc.). And at this conference too, Prof. Etiemble pointedly exposed the limitations of the

arises as much out of their intellectual preoccupations (so different from those of the re-entrenched nobility) as out of the compulsions of a dominant style. Similarly the success of classicism in France surely has more to do with certain permanent features of French culture and language than with the explanation that the social and economic conditions for classicism arose for the first time and most perfectly in France. Why then is English classicism so inferior to French classicism, French romanticism so inferior to German romanticism? Why is there no English Racine, no French Novalis? no Italian Shakespeare? no English, French, or Italian Calderon? Is the style of Dostoevsky supranational? or Mallarmé?

In fact Tibor Klaniczay comes up against great difficulties in his attempt to show that class is the sole basis of style. The evidence forces him to concede that a new style can also impose itself independently of its class origins: in Holland for instance, where Roman Catholic 'refeudalisation' never took place; or in England, where the Puritan Milton 'could not express his ideas, which were in many ways contrary to the baroque concepts of life and feeling, except through the baroque elements of the style of his period.' Why does Klaniczay not seek an explanation for this empirical fact, which might reveal forces other than class forces at work? Why exclude the possibility that these baroque artists had other affinities with the baroque style? 'The relation between the great phases of the history of civilisation and style and the different classes is therefore far from being clearcut (*univoque*),' remarks Klaniczay; 'but we must interpret it in a very subtle manner'—and in fact his accommodation with the facts becomes more and more tortuous, like the even-increasing epicycles of Ptolemaic cosmology.

Furthermore, the whole concept of class is so amorphous (is it defined by birth or behaviour? or by aims, conscious or unconscious?) that it proves as unstable (or adaptable) as the bases it is intended to replace (national styles, styles determining epochs, absolute aesthetic categories). For instance we are told that the new Hungarian aristocracy of the Renaissance exchanged its 'immolerate individualism' for 'order and consolidation' in the 17th century and was 'definitely replaced by the type of nobleman who increased his fortune and enjoyed his riches in peace and security': now surely these are bourgeois characteristics? Yet this same nobility *embourgeoisée* patronized baroque (aristocratic) art, whereas the

impressionism (painting), symbolism (poetry and drama), naturalism (novel and drama)—all contemporary with each other but significantly different. And into this last category Klaniczay places realism, a fall from grace only partly mitigated by the consideration that the novel was (and is still considered?) the most important genre of the age.

The conclusion therefore follows 'a priori' (?) that periodisation cannot be based on style, for even though baroque may designate a period, this is not the case with symbolism and impressionism. But apparently periods are (a priori?) indispensable, so the following schema is proposed:

Middle Ages (with romanesque and gothic styles); renaissance; baroque; classicism (with rationalism and enlightenment on the ideological plane); romanticism; period of flourishing bourgeois culture (with realism as the dominant stylistic tendency, besides impressionism, symbolism, etc.); and to conclude, the great period continuing still today: the period of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, the art and literature of which are characterised by the primordial role of the problems and ideas of socialism, as well as by the preponderance of modern stylistic tendencies.

From this point on the article becomes increasingly dogmatic as we enter the theoretical heart: class struggle is the basis of historical styles—the clarification of this (*mise en lumière*) will 'prove' that history determines styles and not styles define periods.

Thus the Renaissance is the expression of 'the political and social aspirations of the European bourgeoisie at the beginning of the modern age', whereas baroque culture and civilisation is the product of the re-entrenched nobility after their adaptation to the new conditions. As a partial insight this is certainly useful, but why should it be made an absolute? Why should Klaniczay be at such pains to deny the national origin of styles as put forward by W. Friedrich in his *Outline of Comparative Literature* (Renaissance = Italian, baroque = Spanish, classicism = French, etc.). This is another partial insight, helpful up to a point. According to Klaniczay certain countries (Italy for the Renaissance) or certain institutions (the Jesuits for baroque) led the way to establishing new dominant styles, e.g. the bourgeoisie was more developed in Italy in the 14th century. But the style of Jacobean drama or John Donne surely

cultures prefer good old bourgeois realism of the 19th century variety, although in another contribution we are informed that the emancipated workers of Hungary enjoy that most aristocratically ironic of writers: Stendhal!—of course 'not for the berylism, but for the profoundly human message of his realistic work.'

Preoccupied with class, Klaniczay forgets the human. Men are as much differentiated within classes as by them, and whereas the classes are becoming increasingly alike, people retain as great a variety as they always have. Sergey, Levin and Nikolay are three brothers in Tolstoy's novel, yet so different in their attitudes and convictions. The 'aristocrat' Nikolay has more in common with the petit bourgeois heroes of Dostoevsky than with his aristocratic brothers, themselves representing opposite social and political tendencies. Why should 18th century sensibility be an expression of the middle class? It is part of a general refinement of manners, which did not refine everybody any more in those days than now. It flourished equally among upper class readers and the educated middle class. Rousseau's patrons were aristocrats, his heroes and heroines belong to or aspire into the upper class. Modes of feeling cut across classes, relating more to individual personality. Does the experience of love, or death, or springtime differ so significantly from class to class? Does it not rather differ from person to person?

Tibor Klaniczay has merely replaced subjectivism by dogma, and pushed aside the whole problem of evaluation. He took the aesthetes to task for their preferences, but he himself is led to denigrate mannerism as a camouflage for outdated content, and scorn its belief that the world is a labyrinth. László Illés on the other hand admits that the conflict between realism and expressionism was really a matter of taste disguising its subjectivity in ideological terms. The final section reveals a yet graver 'error' (to use a favourite expression of our author). He takes up the question of value and effectively argues (approving René Wellek) that since it is impossible to define the essence of a style, we cannot say that a work of art is greater the more perfectly it expresses a particular style. Furthermore, we cannot prefer one style to another: 'In its historical context, each style is justified; in its own period baroque is as compelling, as "good" a style as the Renaissance style of the preceding period; romanticism cannot be considered superior to classicism, nor realism to Renaissance style.' And 'the possibility of the production of masterpieces exists at every stage

nobility of the Renaissance ('immoderate' individualists) had patronized Renaissance (bourgeois) art! And were we not also told that Renaissance individualism was bourgeois? If a person of aristocratic birth can adopt bourgeois ideology (or vice versa), if an artist can adopt a style opposed to his conscious (or unconscious) aims, if the initiators of a new tendency can write in the contemporary style instead of initiating the new one (early Hungarian baroque writers using the mannerist style), if an individual artist can anticipate a new style by a century (baroque tendencies in Michaelangelo) with so many variables it is hard to see what purpose is served by trying to establish class as the sole basis of style. In order to refute any 'transcendental' origin of styles, it is not necessary to relate them to a single cause: a deterministic basis may still be found in a great variety of socio-historical forces.

Nor does the class basis help periodisation very much: Klaniczay himself affirms that literary and artistic periods cannot be separated very precisely, and admits his own schema is no more than a 'summary sketch'. But he who has so empirically dismissed other theories strikingly reveals his own a priori convictions in his final division between 'period of flourishing bourgeois culture' and 'period of imperialism and proletarian revolutions'. Was there no imperialism associated with the flourishing bourgeois culture? Has the bourgeoisie ceased to flourish? Is not a good deal of the literature of the 19th and early 20th century characterized by 'the primordial role of the problems and ideas of socialism'—more so probably than the literature which followed the first World War. Has Klaniczay never heard of the tendency of the proletariat itself to become bourgeois? Why are the monuments of Soviet Russia so frequently in the style associated with Louis Napoleon? What style is to represent the new age of proletarian struggle—Mayakovski or socialist realism? Who is more 'advanced'—Upton Sinclair or William Faulkner? The dangers of such a priori categorisation are well revealed in an article by one of Klaniczay's fellow contributors on 'Old Quarrels about the Avant-Garde'. László Illés shows how the attempt to impose socialist realism as the style of the victorious proletariat arose from a mistaken attempt to distinguish a 'communist' style from the 'bourgeois' style of expressionism. The rehabilitation of Brecht is the acceptance of a style common to both imperialist and proletarian cultures. Illés does not go so far as to point out that the working class of the 'imperialist'

when it is valueless except as an experience? And when some may read and not have the experience, how can you avoid subjectivism?

Tibor Klaniczay ignores these problems, the most vital and exciting of literary enquiry, and the limitations of his approach are confirmed by the rest of the contributors. One seeks in vain for any attempt to communicate an aesthetic experience, any belief that the works dealt with are other than documents. Value judgements are none the less made (e.g. Lajos Nagy and Zsigmond Móricz as 'summits' of Hungarian realism), but instead of showing how excellence may be distinguished from mediocrity, the emphasis throughout is on types and causes—simplifications like:

After the great French Revolution came the renowned age of romanticism and realism, the age of active heroes struggling for a new society, with or without hope, but in any case actively. That is the tendency presented by Stendhal, Manzoni, Dickens.

What possible literary purpose can be served by lumping together these three? Insights become slogans which irritate by reiteration: French classicism is the expression of a late development of feudalism (but how can this possibly account for the genius of Racine?), 'the social basis of all romanticisms is bourgeois individualism liberated by the French revolution,' the ballad started to supplant the heroic song from the 12th century onwards when the peasants started to become bourgeois—such insights are useful, but lead to false emphasis. Thus great stress is laid on Stendhal as a supporter of revolutionary forces, his 'realism' is stressed as the 'true character of his work', and his psychological subtlety is played down. Or consider this interpretation of Goethe's *Werther*: 'In *Werther* the European readers of the story of the sentimental hero killed by society became aware of the revolting sufferings which accompanied on every page reflections protesting against society.' But *Werther*'s suicide is far more than a protest against social injustice, as Goethe understood more than anybody. This social orientation with its indifference to imaginative quality makes Kafka only of interest in so far as 'occasional deficiencies' in the new Hungarian society keep the problem of alienation actual. There is a constant urge to deny individual vision:

The attempt is often made to discern in Dostoevsky a personal vision, a special method of creation. Yet, knowing this period of

of evolution.' Each new age brings new awareness, new tasks, so that 'in our own time art is in a position to realize even greater achievements, it is capable of representing and expressing the problems of the world and man in a way that is far richer, more varied, deeper, than in any previous period.' It therefore 'follows logically' (to use another favourite expression) that the art of the past is out of date. Who would use horses to plough a field when tractors are available? Klaniczay uses this argument to prove the impossibility of continuing to write in an outdated style, but it must equally apply to the achievements themselves of past periods: since Shakespeare or Goethe were so much *less evolved*, their works can only have a historical interest for us. It follows logically. But what about *la part du beau*? What about all those good resolutions of the Budapest Conference to seek the 'literary causes' as well as the 'social causes'?

Klaniczay completely ignores the urge to renewal and variety from within the literary tradition itself, and the continual rediscovery of the past. Why else should naturalism be replaced by Maeterlinck before its social aims were achieved (as mentioned by Mihály Czine in his article on Hungarian naturalism)? Both naturalism and symbolism are more than responses to a socio-historical situation, they are expressions of the human imagination. By treating works of art as the determinants of social forces, Klaniczay denies their capacity to transcend these forces. In this sense they are all equal, all mere manifestations. To the scientist all human beings are equally lacking in beauty on the dissecting table, all equal products of digestive systems. So Klaniczay can really believe that the art of the Augustan period is as great as that of the Elizabethan period (Dryden as great as Shakespeare?). But then we have the problem of those 'masterpieces' that each age is said to be capable of producing: how do we recognize them? Not, we remember, by their perfect expression of the period style, which cannot be defined absolutely. Klaniczay gives us no means of distinguishing great art from faithful conformity. Initially art is an aesthetic experience, but he shows no interest in art as experience (=subjective!) nor in the individual personality that achieves it. In fact I do not see how he distinguishes literature from any other kind of writing—a David Strauss or a Nietzsche would be all the same to him, or he would probably place Strauss higher as more 'progressive'. Here the archivist is at work: classifying, explaining, not appreciating. But can you treat a work of art as a thing,

examples of Western authors admired in Hungary ('who express authentically the will to march with our century and seize the real values of the age'), they turn out to include C. P. Snow, W. Cooper, and J. B. Priestley!

Towards the end of the volume comes a second theoretical article, which does make some attempt to reinstate *la part du beau*.

With us for many years a conception of literature was rampant (*sévisait*) which rested particularly on the content, the subject-matter of a literary work. But now we see a healthy tendency in our literary science the principle of which is to examine literary phenomena in their correlations, hence the content and the form in their dialectic.

Lajos Nyirö refuses to go to the opposite extreme of René Wellek, who argued that the work of art 'can be conceived as a stratified structure of signs and meanings which is totally distinct from the mental processes of the author at the time of composition and hence of the influences which may have formed his mind.'³ Against this Nyirö argues that social and psychological content *together with the laws of beauty* must both be taken into account in assessing the value of any work. 'To explain the ideas expressed by the work, without taking into account the specific laws of literature, is as erroneous as to meditate on the form while refusing to admit that the form, the structure is only one of the faces of a work.' Then Nyirö raises the question so carefully avoided throughout the rest of the book: how to attain a true judgment of aesthetic value? After denying Wellek's structuralist position and the absolute categories of Lukács' realism-antirealism, and affirming that aesthetic value cannot be separated from historical criteria, he repeats the lesson of Budapest: that literature creates 'new aesthetic values' according to its own 'internal laws'. But without application this lesson is futile. At no point are we shown how to recognize these laws and their results. And if aesthetic value cannot be separated from historical circumstances, yet at the same time is dependent on 'the immanent laws of literature', what is the correlation between the two? So the issue of comparative worth is again skirted. Why for instance might Hesiod be less worth reading than Homer? Are Balzac, Flaubert, and Stendhal of equal value, or how

³ 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature', Chapel Hill, 1958.

the late development of capitalism in Russia, the transformations brought into the patriarchal society by the new mode of life, we are forced to acknowledge that Dostoevsky did nothing but express his age with the same exactitude as that with which Balzac expressed his.

Where then are the other Dostoevskys? And is Tolstoy not also a product of this same age? And as for Balzac expressing his age with 'exactitude', this is so open to question that critics from Baudelaire onwards have been more inclined to see him as a visionary. Here is a modern Western critic describing Balzac's method:

The novelist does his utmost to dramatize experience, to turn people and places into a spectacle which is designed to take the reader's breath away. His characters lose their humanity and become monsters; a sordid street scene assumes an impossibly sinister air.²

Now who is being more 'subjective'—those who believe that Balzac or Dostoevsky describe the world as it is (or was) or those who detect exaggeration? Elsewhere we are told that 'In the last analysis, it is always the truth of the content that decides the aesthetic value' (p. 247). But who decides what is true? Is it not a matter of sensibility and experience when we decide whether Stendhal or Balzac is more 'true'? No novelist is really 'a mirror walking down the street,' as Stendhal proposed and even if he were, the mirror cannot point in all directions at once. Each age produces many versions of the truth. But in these writings there is a clear compulsion to equate truth with the class struggle and the march of the proletariat towards perfection. Thus Stendhal's subtle psychology of human dissatisfaction, or pessimism, would be 'unrealistic' in contemporary Hungary.

Progressivist preoccupations become millenary as the twentieth century is entered. Thus Brecht becomes 'the line of separation between "the 19th century manner" which terminates the period of class societies, and the art of the 20th century considered as the prelude to a new millenium in which the real history of humanity will begin.' (p. 466). Yet this new literature can only be defined in the vaguest clichés: '...towards a modern realism, in conformity with the age, a realism at the centre of which is man, towards a conception which believes in man...' (p. 482), and when we are given

TRANSLATION AND THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

VISUAL art communicates with all who have eyes to see. Music communicates with all who have ears to hear. The communicative powers of language are, however, circumscribed. Painters and musicians may, and often do, speak a medley of many languages. A writer cannot communicate with anyone who does not know the language he himself uses. Language has limitations.

The translator comes to his assistance. He adds another language to the original one, extending the range of the writer's communication. To give literature the range of intelligibility that visual or tonal art enjoys would require the services of a whole battery of translators. Yet the need to know and understand, which has always been great, has never been greater than it is today. Animosities are born of ignorance and can only be dispelled by knowledge.

Though the appeal of language is circumscribed it has certain advantages over the other arts because it is able to preserve experience in a comparatively durable and intelligible form. Ancient manuscripts that have been discovered and deciphered mean more to us than, say, the Easter Island sculptures. Language can tell us about the other arts and elucidate their meaning. For this reason language is the greatest storehouse of our human heritage, a heritage to which each and all have right of access. It belongs personally to every individual and must be placed at his disposal.

A translator presents to readers in one language a work of art created in another. Like an actor, a dancer or violinist he stands between the creator and his audience. It is only through him that the audience can be brought into contact with the work of the creator. Unlike an actor, a dancer, or a violinist, however, his performance is invisible. Its success depends upon the skill with which he

may we account for their aesthetic differences? Would Lajos Nyirö agree with Antal Mádl's acceptance of Leon Feuchtwanger and Bruno Frank as significant figures of German literature? How would he compare their aesthetic worth with that of Musil or Broch? It is still not clear whether worth is related to best representing one's age, or how the age is to be defined in relation to those 'immanent laws'. We are told that the tracing of influences is 'a sort of plot against the originality of writers', yet Nyirö apparently sees them bound by internal laws and historical forces. Instead of analysis, we are given vague slogans: 'To judge the aesthetic qualities of literary phenomena, a correct conception of literature is above all necessary'—yet this correct conception is nowhere defined. Nyirö is against historical relativism, yet won't commit himself to a general theory, merely stressing the necessity of 'keeping one in view'. He appears to be trying to reconcile too many incompatible demands, arguing for theoretical desiderata without the pragmatic test of applying them.

It is a pity that ideological bias and inhibitions should obstruct the true aim of writing on literature, which is to communicate appreciation. A pity that political bias should creep in to distort judgement, as when we are told that the historical novel is inhibited in West Germany because the West Germans refuse to confront their own past (what about Hochhut? Grass?). Fortunately, leaving aside these non-literary preoccupations, there is much that may be read with interest and profit in this thick volume. The Budapest Conference made evident the need for intelligent *vulgarisation* in order to spread knowledge of literatures in little learnt languages, and this compilation partly serves that purpose. We may learn of the influence of Erasmus on Hungary, the forms taken by the Hungarian baroque, the impact of sentimentalism, and so forth. The articles on mediaeval legends and poetry in their interrelationship with the rest of Europe are particularly interesting. In fact the documentation of obscure episodes in literary history, such as the correspondence between Csokonai and Sir William Jones is of more value than the tendentious accounts of classicism and romanticism, or the anti-fascist novel. Other articles are only for the specialist, e.g. 'The Role of Pest-Buda in the formation of the East European literatures.' The volume concludes with a history of Comparative Literature in Hungary, and a bibliography of critical works. The entire contents have been translated into French for international accessibility.

upon imponderable factors that go to make up the virtues of fidelity and sympathy. Without them the work will be unrecognisable.

In order to know what a work is like and what its value is the person who presents it must have, along with a flawless mastery of language techniques, a sense of tradition, a wide knowledge of the two literatures involved (that of the source language and the receptor language), and an over-all culture that is not merely a question of acquired learning. An even greater degree of culture is required of a translator than of a creator for the work of translation is complicated by differences of century, geography, country, civilisation, culture, period, class, occupation. A translator must be completely familiar with the style of the work entrusted to him, have a taste for expressive values, a secure sense of what and how much can be taken for granted and a knowledge of limitations. Literature does not move in the abstract. Its translation requires exactitude and beauty.

Both the creator and the translator find their freedom in a flexibility that enables them to submit and subordinate themselves with extreme rigor to the particular aesthetic experience they are attempting to express. The secret of perfection, for the creator as well as the translator, lies in his consciousness of the law imposed upon him by the work he has in hand. Such an active participation in the aesthetic experience on the part of a translator is, admittedly, a rare thing. A genuine creator is also rare.

The act of creation itself may be described as an act of translation, in the true sense of the word. The creator translates the inner into the outer, the unknown into the known, the latent into the actual. The composing of a work of art requires a conscious effort, long contemplation and patient organisation. Understanding is always a complex business, consisting of many phases, each complete in itself and leading on to the next. No work of art is a closed whole. Our understanding of it grows the better we come to know it. A translator must participate in the author's emotions and in the activities with which these are bound up. He is his partner in the work of artistic creation.

A translator, therefore, even more than the creator, needs to understand the creative process. He must be able to distinguish between the pseudo-aesthetic world of make-believe and the authentic world of imaginative experience. Essentially the artist is a person who comes to know himself, to know his own feelings. This knowing

effaces himself. No one knows him. No one applauds him. His profession brings him no bouquets. And he is miserably paid. The great translations of the world have all been done by people above pecuniary need. The translators who serve literature faithfully and loyally are much rarer than those who, in order to earn a living, make literature serve them. Bad translators are certainly in the majority. But the bad ones should not make us forget the good ones!

A writer runs a perilous risk every time he is translated. The sin against the spirit of a work always begins with a sin against its letter and leads to the endless follies which an ever-flourishing body of writing in the worst taste does its best to sanction. The writer is often the victim of abstractors of quintessences who waste time splitting hairs without so much as noticing egregious blunders! Both the writer and the reader have the right to demand of a translator that he treat the writer's work with as much respect as if it were his own, with the loving care that alone gives perfection. This does not mean that he can impose any ideas on the author or even correct or disguise his foibles, follies or clumsiness. Intellectual honesty requires the translator to keep the process of communication as free as possible from personal intrusion. Translation is a wholly anonymous activity.

A creative writer is a writer in so far as he succeeds in affecting the reader in certain ways. A translator is a translator in so far as he succeeds in affecting his reader in the way the original author affected his. A translation must have the same power of evoking an aesthetic experience that the original possesses, producing in the reader an emotion he could not experience except for the translator. The task of the translator is, in other words, to enable a reader to participate in an experience which was of importance to the original author. The translator's purpose is therefore identical with that of the author. He should take up the work of only those authors for whom he has a strong liking.

A piece of writing wherein the writer's will is explicit and easily discernible, from a correctly established text, is placed before the translator. But no matter how scrupulously the work may be written, how carefully punctuated, annotated and otherwise insured against every possible ambiguity, it always contains hidden elements that defy definition because verbal dialectic is powerless to define dialectic in its totality. The realisation of these elements is a matter of experience and intuition. The competent presentation of a work depends

The Herne's Egg is one of the most complicated last plays that Yeats wrote. He himself described it as "the strangest, wildest thing,"¹ a very Rabelaisian play having "more tragedy and philosophical depth" than even *The Player Queen*.² His biographer Joseph Hone calls the play "too ribald to be produced."³ As a matter of fact the Abbey stage at one time seriously considered it for production, but hesitated. Speculations were rife regarding the significance of the various symbols in the play. When an admiring member of the Abbey Board of Directors decided that the seven ravishers of the heroine probably were the seven sacraments, Yeats persuaded others to drop the idea of staging it after all, fearing an uproar in Dublin for which he was no longer prepared in his old age.⁴

The most detailed examination of the play has been attempted by Professor F. A. C. Wilson.⁵ He points out some common elements existing between Balzac's *Seraphita* and this play. The seven ravishers, for example, have, according to him, corresponding "seven devils" in Balzac, who want to violate Seraphita. Wilson also points out the meaningful use in this play of the image of "arrow-smith" taken from Yeats's own translation of the *Katha Upanishad*.⁶ Wilson's interpretation on the whole is a serious one, but I fail to agree entirely with what he has to say. I suggest on the other hand that the play should be read as Yeats's symbolic vision regarding the conditions that led finally to the break-down of the ancient heroic age. Some interesting details of Yeats's association with Shri Purohit Swami will throw unexpected light on the problem of this interpretation. While explaining how this relationship is significant towards an understanding of the play, I shall also show

of himself is the making of himself. He emerges as a conscious artist from an undifferentiated psyche through the act of creation. As he comes to know himself he comes to know his world, its sights, its sounds, its language. This realising of the world is the making of a world, a world in which everything has the property of expressing emotion, a world of language. The translator must know it thoroughly before he can reconstruct it in a new medium. Through contemplation and empathy he must grasp the main features of the work as they emerge and follow the changing aspects of its unfolding, identifying himself with the creator as far as possible, making his experience his own.

The translator also has to create. Every genuine expression must be an original one. Artistic activity creates language as it goes along. No good writer uses clichés. Art will not tolerate them. Characteristic turns of phrase, exclamations, verbal gestures may, in the hands of imitators, become clichés. But the artistic activity which creates these habits and constructs such external records of itself, supersedes and jettisons them as soon as its purpose is served. No translator can use clichés. He has to create a language to suit the author's purpose as he goes along just like the author himself. What does a translator translate? He translates the total imaginative experience of the author. The greatest artistic powers, for their due and proper display, demand a technique as good in its kind as they are in their own. The better the technique the better the translation. No translation whatever can be produced without some degree of technical skill. A violinist, an actor or a dancer, has to be able to play or perform in many different styles. He selects the one suited to the work in hand. The translator must also have a wide range of styles at his disposal from which he selects the one that conveys the meaning of the chosen work in the source language to the reader in the receptor language with the greatest possible degree of authenticity.

sensitive, but he is writing in a language in which he does not think. Tell him to go back to India and start a boycott of the English language. When the English insisted on all the higher education of the Indians being carried on in English they did the greatest wrong to India, making a stately people clownish, putting indignity into their very souls. Probably your poet has talent, may even make a name for himself, if he will write in the language he has learned in childhood."¹⁰ He therefore refused to write a preface to the poems. But something happened before long and when he edited *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* in 1937 he chose to include quite a few of the same Swami's poems. The only other Indian whose poems he picked is Rabindranath!

In spite of this apparent change of mind Yeats remained more interested in the Yogic experiences of the Swami for a special purpose of his own. Through Sturge Moore he encouraged Shri Purohit to write his autobiography and instructed him to give objective narrative first. 'Only when that is complete' he might give his doctrine. He insisted on this because ideas were not lacking in the West, but the spiritual experiences were.¹¹ With Shri Purohit the preacher and poet, Yeats had hardly anything to do. Even later, while going over to Majorca for translating the Upanishads with the Swami, Yeats was not in any way under his special influence.¹² Purohit claimed that as a Yogic practitioner he had reached the third concentration, *sushupti*. Yeats had tried for years to have these experiences himself, with no luck. So here was for him a living Yogi whom he could watch closely and who could be helpful with first-hand information regarding unfashionable traditional faiths, beliefs and practices of India. He was all the more useful because he was prepared to allow himself to be "handled" by others.¹³ Thus Shri Purohit having been to England as a preacher seeking a poet's fame ended up by writing an autobiography for Yeats's use. Even with the imprint of Faber and Faber and an introduction by Yeats himself the book attracted very little notice in India and hardly more anywhere else. Yeats, however, persisted and wanted him to do something more. Was there no one who had achieved the "Fourth" or *turiya*? Could not his experiences also be made available? Probably to meet this need Shri Purohit had to translate, from Marathi, an autobiography of another Indian, —this time of his Master, Bhagawan Shri Hamsa.

that *The Herne's Egg* is an amusing reply to a play by an Indian poet—*The King of the Dark Chamber* of Rabindranath Tagore. Yeats read Tagore's play in translation in 1913 as soon as it was done by a talented Bengali young man studying in England, and took initiative in its first production at the Little Theatre in London. But let us consider the influence of the Swami first.

Yeats met Shri Purohit Swami, though Sturge Moore, sometime in 1931.⁷ The relationship of this monk and one of the greatest modern poets of Europe is unusually strange. Yeats discovered confirmation of some of the ideas he had cherished for a long time from this little known religious preacher from India, just as Baudelaire found his ideas regarding symbolist poetry confirmed by the little known poems and essays of Edgar Allan Poe. Both poets distorted their sources, willingly or not.

Unlike saints and religious leaders like Rāmakrishna, Vivekānanda, or Dayānanda, Shri Purohit Swami's name is mainly known not so much to the general public as to the students of Yeats's poetry. He was a Marathi Brahmin, born in Berar in 1882.⁸ In 1903 he earned his B.A. degree from the Calcutta University of those days, and from his early years practised Bhakti-Yoga. In addition, he wrote poetry of a kind in four languages—Marathi, Hindi, Urdu and English. In 1913, presumably after the Nobel Prize award to Tagore, Shri Purohit was advised (perhaps ironically!) by the very Reverend Dr. R. Scott, Principal of Wilson College, Bombay, to go to England with his poems if he wanted success. Finally he did manage to go to England, though not in 1913 but in 1931, and not as a poet but primarily as a Hindu Swami with an introduction in his pocket from Bhārat Dharma Mahāmandal.

Evidently he had remembered Dr. Scott's advice, and so with poems in plenty went straight to Rothenstein and Sturge Moore, the same two persons who had been intimately connected with the initial introduction of Tagore to London's literary world. On June 17, 1931, Sturge Moore wrote to Yeats that the Swami had given him six or seven hundred poems written in "Babu English."⁹ In February, 1932, Moore requested Yeats to consider writing a preface to a selection from these poems. In August, 1933, Rothenstein asked Yeats to "look at" the poems. Yeats was stern and explicit this time in his reply: "I send back to you the Indian's poems. I have no doubt that your Indian is, as you say, charming and

Hinduism and basing it solely on the intellectual abstractions of the Upanishads, the followers of the Brahmo Samaj had reduced Hinduism to something more resembling Protestant Christianity than anything else. The only subtle difference was that in Christianity Christ is the *only* son of God, whereas even a 'reformed' Hindu could never "surrender that ineradicable belief in the substantial identity of the eternal element in God and man."¹⁹ Yeats openly supported the views of Shri Purohit Swami, thus bringing into the open his old difference with Tagore. The Swami supported his interest in the world of spirits and the Yogic discipline. This only shows how Yeats's attitude to Indian tradition was different from Max Müller's. He came to equate unmodified traditional Hinduism with early Christian "Irishry", and compared Shri Purohit, with his faith in miracles and the supernatural, to the ancient Irish Cellach "who sang upon his death bed of bird and beast."²⁰ Bhagawan Shri Hamsa's pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, the legendary Meru, and to Lake Manas suggested to him the "pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick and to Lough Derg."

Shri Purohit became thus the image of a living saint suitable for a heroic society of Yeats's conception. Both of them believed in a subjective system where the individual self is potentially all-powerful. The Swami, of course, could decide to go, if he wanted, *beyond* history following the extreme forms of Yogic discipline of the mind. By following the same discipline Yeats could dream of integrating his personality and remain *in* history. Until all desires are spent, this arrangement is quite acceptable in the Yogic system of meditation. Body and soul are not antagonistic principles in the subjective conception of life. The personal self and the Universal Self, the Sun and Moon in Yeatsian symbology, must play a game of hide and seek, until the Moon helplessly plunges into the Sun. In the poem "He and She,"²¹ one of the "Supernatural Songs," Yeats expresses this personal metaphysics or his "centric myth" as he calls it.²² The idea is that the personal self must realize fully its human possibilities before surrendering to God, must sidle up like the upholders of tradition. Many of them asserted that by reforming

His light had struck me blind
Dared I stop.

Civilization is built and maintained owing to this struggle of escape

Yeats of course did not take up the Swami all too eagerly. At first he wanted to find some one else, some woman perhaps, "who could handle the Swami" properly. The name of AE was considered at one time as he had a "passion for the East" and was known to Tagore and Gandhi. Yeats was aware that Sturge Moore had given up the Swami because of some unpleasant development in their relation, and also because he had proved himself to be of weak character.¹⁴ A rich woman called Mrs. G. Roden, who nursed the ailing poet in Majorca and, out of deep reverence for his companion, promised to endow an *āshrama* (a hermitage) for him in India,¹⁵ became grievously disillusioned with the Swami at last. She had direct information, from Purohit's own family, about "things of a nature that dispelled the saintship for ever."¹⁶ Yeats was, of course, kept informed about these developments. But though he never surrendered himself to the spiritual professions of the Swami, he did not give him up either.¹⁷ The five essays that he wrote on the Indian Yogic system and the Upaniṣads were really meant to clarify his already formed notions. A few gaps in his personal system, however, were giving him trouble. In the exposition of his psychology in *A Vision*, there were some phases, particularly 15 and 28, for which he did not find any historical characters as examples. With the self-portraits of Shri Purohit and his Master in his collection, he eagerly set himself to fill in some of these important gaps in his system. He put Bhagawan Shri Hamsa in phase 15, and Shri Purohit in phase 28.¹⁸ This was because Shri Hamsa is supposed to have attained *turiya*, which is the highest realization, while keeping full consciousness; and Shri Purohit had only attained *sushupti*, which is the dreamless sleep of the soul in God, and is an unconscious realization.

In Shri Purohit Yeats found a man who fully supported his own reading of the traditional systems of India by his experience and profession. The Swami did not interpret the Upaniṣads as Tagore did. Both he and Yeats emphasized the importance of the *Māndukya* Upaniṣad about which Tagore was generally silent. Shri Purohit represented unmodified traditionalism, while Tagore was for the modern and rational interpretation of the same tradition. Between their respective positions there is a significant difference. Until very recently Tagore's Brahmo Samaj was the butt of criticism from the upholders of tradition. Many of them asserted that by reforming

Great Herne an emblem of the Self beyond Time. And it is here that I want to bring in Yeats's description of Tagore in his homage on Tagore's seventieth birthday. Tagore, according to Yeats, stood for a vision of life "separated from all that is not itself, from all that is complicated and mechanical." Thus in praising Tagore he took pains to carefully define the basic difference of his own attitude to life. In *The King of the Dark Chamber* he first realised this difference. Twenty two years later he chose to write a variation on the same theme.

Tagore's play is rather complicated and it is difficult to make a summary of the story. The points of resemblance between the two plays, however, can be briefly stated here. In both there are two central figures: a woman in love with the Godhead, and a hero who refuses to bow before Him as the ultimate Reality. In Tagore the Godhead is called "The King of the Dark Chamber." (I imagine, Yeats's "The King of the Great Clock Tower" was a rebuttal!) The Queen can meet Him only in total darkness, and does not know what He looks like. In Yeats He is called the Great Herne, and He unites with Attracta, the Priestess, who has been there for thousands of years, in "the blazing heart of the sun" or in "his black midnight" where the Great Herne

Extinguish sun, moon, star.
No bridal torch can burn
When his black midnight is there.²⁰

In both the plays the sceptical heroes (Congal in Yeats, the King of Kanchi in Tagore) are accompanied by seven other heroes, not six as Mr. Wilson counts, and in both plays one of these companions refrains from participating in the desecration of the heroine. Yeats's list of characters at the beginning of the play shows six associates of Congal. In the actual play a seventh man appears, and one of them, Peter, dissociates himself at the last moment from the revolt against the god. Tagore's King of Kanchi has a suspicion that the King of the Dark Chamber is a mere fiction, and so he conspires to take away by force the Queen who is visible enough. Yeats's Congal also does not believe in His reality, and arranges for ravishing His priestess. The sound of music signifies in both the plays His invisible presence. In Yeats the music is of a mysterious flute which is an oblique reference to the flute of Krishna. (Around 1924 Yeats

from God where ultimately there is no escape. Shri Purohit would have assented to this notion. Did not his Master send him back to his family to perform his social duty and exhaust his passion and emotion, even though he wanted all at once to become a complete ascetic? Yeats was evidently charmed by this generous qualification of his "saintliness." Since Shri Purohit did not put all the emphasis on the self that is separated from everything that is not itself, Yeats found no conflict of this conception with that of his heroic society. Thus fortified he then began to write in *The Herne's Egg* a refutation of the position taken in Tagore's play *The King of the Dark Chamber*. Meaningfully, he called his play—Shri Purohit's philosophy "in a fable" or his own philosophy confirmed by Shri Purohit.²³

"The Herne's Egg" is a clever translation of the Sanskrit term *Brahmānda*, the egg of Brahma, the world, and Yeats's intention will be clear if one remembers what the herne stands for in his symbology. It is a variation of the Indian image of the Swan symbolizing a solitary soul separated from everything that is not itself. In a note on *Calvary*, Yeats wrote in 1920: "Certain birds, especially as I see things, such lonely birds as the herne, hawk, eagle, and swan, are natural symbols of subjectivity, especially when floating upon the wind alone, or alighting upon some pool or river." The herne, as he uses it here, is an abstraction like Tagore's King (of the Dark Chamber). Other variations of this solitary bird appear in Yeats as the "Old Crane of Gort" in "The Three Beggars" (1913); as the swan in "Broken Dreams" (1915), "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" (1919), "The Tower" (1925), and in "Coole Park and Ballylee" (1931); as "heron-billed pale cattle birds" in "At Algeciras—A Meditation Upon Death" (1929); as "the white heron" in *Calvary* (1920); and at last as the Great Herne in *The Herne's Egg* (begun in Majorca in December, 1935). He was aware of the implication of the image in Indian paintings where it stands for the soul freed from all bondage.²⁴ He was so enamoured of this image that when in 1915 he asked Sturge Moore to engrave a book-plate for him, a heron was placed in the middle of the sketch as his personal emblem signifying "the soul in the midst of the winter of the flesh or in Time."²⁵

While his personal emblem was the swan in the midst of Time, it is significant that in *The Herne's Egg* he intentionally makes the

recognition. The drama shows how through separation and suffering, she prepares herself for the final surrender to her Lord. The king of Kanchi's revolt ends in utter futility though the Lord's victory is followed by His remote unconcern. Tagore's theme is, therefore, the nature of the Lord's love, and the play shows how individual souls realize His presence in the deep hearts core by passing through suffering, love and renunciation. Yeats converts this plot into a Rabelaisian study of the break-down of the heroic age.

It is difficult to agree with Mr. Wilson that Congal and his associates represent the *Rajas* and the six enemies of man which, according to Indian tradition, are vanity, jealousy, sloth, anger, greed, and lust.³⁰ They can be better understood by a reference to Yeats and Shri Purohit's translation of the Upanishads where in a footnote to the *Māndukya* Upanishad Yeats explains the "seven agents."³¹ Of the four states of Reality, in Indian thought, "first comes the material condition—common to all—perception turned outward, seven agents, nineteen agencies, wherein the Self enjoys coarse matter. This is known as the waking condition." This condition is also called *Vaisvānara*, the great eater. The seven agents, Yeats explains by a reference to Indian tradition, are the whole visible universe conceived as a great body, with Heaven as head, Sun as eye, Air as breath, Fire as heart, Water as belly, Earth as feet, and Space as body. In Yeats's play, Congal, the hero, has been reduced to an extreme sceptic because of the development of extreme abstractions regarding the godhead. He has become the "eater," and wants to enjoy the whole universe which is the great Herne's Egg. For no fault of his own he has lost vision of anything greater than the visible universe represented by his seven associates. As a result of this, the cult of war which is presented as a rhythmic dance at the beginning of the play is finally reduced to mean brute skirmishes with legs of chairs and tables as weapons. The Heroic age has degenerated.

Yeats puts entire responsibility for this tragic change on Attracta's cold faith. As the high priestess she has made the conception of godhead into such an abstraction that the heroes of the land have become uninterested in Him. There is, however, a last flicker of heroic virtue in Congal's uncompromising revolt and final death. He has no illusion about his inevitable end at the hand of a fool, and for this he does not need to be cursed by an oracle. As a final

played with the idea of "inventing for Cuchulaine some youthful sojourn in the forest, and writing for him many love-poems like those Indian poets have put into the mouth of Krishna.")²⁷ One should play on the flute properly to call the priestess effectively, as Radha was supposed to have been called by Krishna. That Yeats is not in a serious mood in his reference to this mysterious musical instrument can be gathered from the fact that the flute is said to have been curved out of a heron's thigh bone; if one feels unequal to the task of playing it properly one may appoint a deputy to play for him, though his hands must be crossed with silver.²⁸ The reference is, of course, to the priestcraft which Yeats detested.

Congal asserts that *Attracta* had developed her mystical notions of personal relationship with the abstract godhead because of her repressed sensuality, and, repelled by her coldness, prescribes that she be ravished by seven soliders for a cure. In Tagore, understandably, this type of extreme prescription is not to be expected. The Queen's mystical relationship is treated there more solemnly. The Queen and the Priestess, however, have one thing in common—both have a deep sense of sanctity. Tagore's heroine admits that her body "has received a stain," but asserts all the same that the dark chamber, where the Lord would come to meet her, "lies cold and empty" within her bosom, and none has opened its door but the Lord. After she has been ravished by the Seven, *Attracta*, in a similar vein, declares:

The Herne is my husband.
I lay beside him, his pure bri

And finally, in both the plays the time of "action" is the full moon in March.

Considering that Yeats had personally arranged, in 1913, for the first production of *The King of the Dark Chamber* in London, after which he became gradually cold toward Tagore, and also that there are so many points of correspondence, it seems most probable that Yeats was writing a variation of Tagore's theme. He has been in the meantime encouraged by the doctrinal position of Shri Purohit, whose concepts were, to his satisfaction, less abstract than Tagore's.

In Tagore, the Queen is impatient to "see" her Lord face to face without considering if she is prepared to endure the shock of

biography which he himself persuaded the Swami to write. See also *The Wheels and Butterflies* (New York, 1935), p. 33, and "An Indian Monk" in *Essays and Introductions* (New York, 1961), pp. 426-28.

⁶ See his autobiography, *An Indian Monk* (London, 1932), to which Yeats contributed a preface.

⁷ I saw copies of this and subsequent letters of Sturge Moore, quoted in this article, in the possession of Richard Ellmann.

¹⁰ See Rothenstein, *Men and Memories* (New York, 1940), III, 111. He does not identify the Indian Poet, but from circumstantial evidence it seems that the poet is Shri Purohit.

¹¹ See *W. B. Yeats and Y. Sturge Moore: Their Correspondence, 1901-1937* (London, 1953), p. 107. Later referred to as "Yeats-Sturge Moore Correspondence."

¹² On November 15, 1935, Yeats wrote to Dorothy Wellesley: 'The very fact that I am going with a man whose mind I touch on only one point, means peace. I can live in my own mind and write poetry; can go into a dream and stay there.' That one point was obviously the spiritual experience of the Swami. (See Yeats's *Letters*, p. 842).

¹³ Yeats-Sturge Moore Correspondence, p. 169.

¹⁴ Moore wrote to Yeats on March 28, 1932: 'I had come to the conclusion that the Swami is a weak character who had done all he could to become a saint and failed. His Master is the saint and may be a character on the plane of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda for all I know but not Swami. You cannot imagine how much silly boasting I have cut out [from the Swami's autobiography] and often when Swami's sentiments had been altogether incongruous with his professions I corrected them as well as his words....'

Sturge Moore edited part of the Swami's autobiography. The rest was reshaped by Yeats himself.

¹⁵ Copy of unpublished letter from Sturge Moore to Yeats on March 28, 1932, in the possession of Richard Ellmann.

¹⁶ Copy of Mrs. Foden's letter to Sean O'Faolain, on October 19, 1936, in possession of Richard Ellmann.

¹⁷ The Swami perhaps requested Yeats, through Olivia Shakespeare, to become a regular member of his religious group. Mrs. Shakespeare received this reply from the poet: 'I have given the Swami the support of my name already, my giving official rank in his society would add nothing.' See Yeats's *Letters*, p. 829.

¹⁸ See "The Holy Mountain" in *Essays and Introductions*, p. 472: "I find my imagination setting in one line *turiya*—full moon, mirror-like bright water, Mount Meru; and in the other *sushupti*, moonless night 'dazzling darkness'—Mount Gernar." Full moon is phase 15, moonless night phase 28.

¹⁹ See Max Müller, *Rammohan to Ramakrishna* (Calcutta, 1952), pp. 59 ff. This great Orientalist and the editor of the *Rg Veda* hopefully watched the development of the Brahmo reformation in India, and believed that if the Christian missionaries did not demand unconditional surrender and submission, the neo-Hindus could be easily won over. A man like Athanasius, he suggested, might easily have persuaded them to regard their consubstantiality the same as the divine son-ship of man, 'if that expression had been fully explained to the Vedantists.'

Tagore was not, of course, a member of the Sen Group of the Brahmo Samaj, which was very near to Christianity, but the Christian Fathers claimed him as the same to be a clear product of Christianity in India. See S. Radhakrishnan, *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* (London, 1919), p. 4 ff.

heroic gesture he refuses to be meekly killed by Attracta's fool, and kills himself. Standing before this heroic determination of Congal, even Attracta is moved at last. Cold once like the snow fallen among wintry rocks, she hurriedly prepares to mate at last, now that the hero is dead, with the fool Corney, forgetting for once her boast of virginity. Her sole aim is to save the hero's soul from being reborn as a lower species of animal owing to his crime of enjoying the world without first bowing before the Great Herne. The hero is also guilty of his desecration of the Great Herne's bride. Out of pity, perhaps out of regret, she is now ready to bear a child herself, expecting that the child would be a reincarnation of Congal's heroic self. But it is too late to amend. The heroic age has been ended by her own action.

The cycle of civilization changes because of the intellectual separation between thought and action which Attracta had initiated. In the Indian context, the composition of the Upaniṣads signalized, according to Yeats and many others, such a change in history.³² The abstractions of the Upaniṣads led to Buddhism, the self came to be regarded as all important, and, as a result, the heroic age ended in India. This is quite an unexpected twist given to the theme of *The King of the Dark Chamber*. Yeats brings to the theme a different kind of universal implication. His play ends with the prospect of the birth of an ass in the place of heroes like Congal. The wry suggestion is that the age of asses follows the heroic age if thought and action, spirit and matter, are so separated. The story is as much India's as it is of Ireland.

¹ Yeats's letter to Ethel Mannin in *Letters of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Allan Wade (London, 1955), p. 845. Hereafter referred to as 'Yeats's Letters.'

² Ibid., pp. 904 and 493.

³ Joseph Hone, *W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939* (New York, 1943), p. 495.

⁴ Yeats's *Letters*, p. 905.

⁵ cf. F. A. C. Wilson, *W. B. Yeats and Tradition* (London, 1958), pp. 101 ff.

⁶ cf. *The Ten Principal Upaniṣads* (London, 1937), p. 38.

⁷ Yeats met the Indian Yogi in 1931 and not in 1932 as Richard Ellmann suggests. See the preface (1931) to *The Words Upon a Window Pane* where Yeats refers to particular supernatural incidents from Shri Purohit's auto-

Report

IN honour of the birth centenary of W. B. Yeats, the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur organized a three-day Festival and Seminar from December 25 to 27, 1965. The Director of the Seminar was Dr. Naresh Guha, and Mr. David McCutcheon was its Associate-Director. As a part of the Festival the Department organized an exhibition of more than seventy mounted photographs, many quite unusual and rare, mostly of Yeats himself or of people and places associated with him, together with a display of books including many first editions, and some manuscript fascimilies. It was an important occasion to bring together on the campus scholars and lovers of poetry from different parts of the country. 'Yeats and India' was the general theme of the seminar discussion. After inauguration by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Triguna Sen, the opening paper of the Seminar was read by Professor M. M. Bhalla of Rajasthan University, who gave a detailed philosophical examination of Yeats's metaphysical beliefs and their implications for his poetry. Professor Bhalla called Yeats's images 'expansive', for they set up 'reverberations' out to the 'vast design' of the universe and all human experience of it— but not beyond it, as with the Symbolists. For Yeats is no mystic: as he said himself, saints belong to the centre, artists to the periphery. Nor does Yeats merely *submit* to the flow of images and ideas; unlike the Surrealists, he imposes lucidity and structure—not scientific rationality, but 'another kind of rationality.' Next, Mr. D. McCutcheon of Jadavpur took up the theme of Yeats as an artist of the periphery in contrast with T. S. Eliot who sought the centre. Yeats is the *subjective* poet 'raging in the dark', as opposed to Eliot, the *objective* poet who prefers a

²⁰ See note to *The King of the Great Clock Tower* (Dundrum, Cuala, 1934), quoted in *Variorum*, p. 837.

²¹ *Collected Poems* of W. B. Yeats, p. 331.

²² See Yeats's letter to Olivia Shakespeare, on August 28, 1934, in *Letters*, p. 827.

²³ See Yeats's note on *Calvary* (1920) in *Plays and Controversies* (London, 1923), p. 459.

²⁴ See Yeats's essay "Art and Ideals" (1913) in *Essays and Introductions*, p. 355, where Yeats argues against pure art and for the use of the traditional symbols and ideas. As an illustration he refers to the swans in the Rajput painting symbolizing the soul's lonely journey beyond the pleasures of life. In *Yeats's Iconography*, p. 197, F. A. C. Wilson points this out, and adds that Yeats had a copy of E. P. Horowitz, *The Indian Theatre* (London, 1912) where the symbol is explained.

²⁵ Yeats's unpublished letter to his sister Lily, written on February 18, 1912, from Woburn Buildings. Copy in possession of Ellmann.

²⁶ *Collected Plays*, p. 413.

²⁷ See preface to *The Cat and the Moon* (Cuala, 1924).

²⁸ *Collected Plays*, p. 408.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 420.

³⁰ Wilson, *Yeats and Tradition*, p. 128.

³¹ Yeats-Purohit, *Upanishads*, p. 59.

³² See Yeats's Introduction to Shri it Swami's *Aphorisms of Yoga*, p. 14.

opposed preferences. For Professor Narasimhaiah of Mysore University, Yeats was the poet of 'generosity', who chose to express the imperfections of living rather than any ideal vision. Unlike Christian *pity* (Wilfred Owen), his *sympathy* is like the 'flow' of which D. H. Lawrence wrote between man and woman. Yeats considered poetry the equivalent of action in life, and 'knew the wages of beauty'. From this 'shared agony' arose that forgiveness which can embrace even a MacBride. For Dr. Sisir Ghose of Visva-Bharati, on the other hand, Yeats betrayed his duty as a poet to express 'Reality', and for Dr. Ghose the standard of Reality was the Vedas. From this point of view Yeats is inconsistent, amoral and rhetorical. Instead of generosity, Dr. Ghose found the insensitiveness of the aesthete who turns suffering into art. He contrasted the 'artificial' use of the mask by Yeats with the true traditional 'masks of God' (Joseph Campbell) which reveal Reality. The ensuing discussion again took sides between those who believed a poet should conceive reality as a unity, or, as Mr. Bhalla put it, 'believe no single image, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or any other, can capture the vast design.'

The last morning began with a translation of an essay by the eminent modern Bengali poet Sudhindranath Datta on Yeats and Art for Art's Sake: a true poet is not to be judged by his philosophy—his images and ideas take their unity from the poet's own being. Professor Narasimhaiah, after enquiring about the original terms, expressed surprise that such sophisticated critical terminology was already current in Bengali when the essay was written (1935). Next Professor V. Y. Kantak of M. S. University, Baroda, took up the 'holy horror', as he said some people called it, meaning Yeats's imagery of sexual union as a symbol of metaphysical reality—the interlocking gyres which constitute a sphere. It was central to Dr. Kantak's theme that he should insist upon the 'bestial' side of this imagery, *swineherd* and queen, for in contrast with previous use of such imagery in religious poetry, Yeats does *not* allow the metaphysical to transcend the physical. Dr. Kantak's treatment of the many poems and plays illustrating this theme led to the usual objections from the Higher Dreamers, and a lengthy discussion comparing the treatment of sex in Yeats and D. H. Lawrence.

The last two papers of the Seminar, before and after lunch following on Dr. Kantak's excursus on the bestial floor, both dealt with the early poetry. Dr. Naresh Guha insisted on Yeats's rejection

heavenly mansion. Mr. McCutcheon particularly contrasted Yeats's pursuit of personality (Masks, etc.) with Eliot's suppression of personality, and pointed to the close similarity between Yeats's conception of personality and his conception of the creative act. Taking up Schiller's antithetical terms, Mr. McCutcheon associated Eliot with the melancholy 'sentimental' tradition, and Yeats with the 'naive' expression of joy.

The morning of the second day was entirely devoted to Yeats's relationship with Shri Purohit Swami, and their translation of the Upaniṣads. According to Mr. Jeff Masson, a Fulbright scholar from Harvard at present working in Bombay, the translation is very bad—not only unscholarly and inaccurate, but even omitting some of the most poetic passages! Mr. Masson put the blame squarely on Shri Purohit, which raised the whole question of the Swami's qualifications and why Yeats associated with him. Dr. S. R. Mokashi of Bombay, who had been working on the unpublished Yeats-Shri Purohit letters, not only indicated the extent of Yeats's indebtedness to Shri Purohit in the 'Supernatural Songs', but was inclined to defend him as a genuine missionary and living practitioner of his faith. To this Dr. Guha (Jadavpur) objected with evidence of the Swami's vanity, and the poor esteem in which he was generally held in Europe. It was finally decided that Yeats, in typical preference for a living person over libraries of books, sought the company of Shri Purohit Swami more for his own poetic purposes than for any scholarly design

in order to be 'reborn in imagination' as he wrote to Dorothy Wellesley. Mr. P. Lal of St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, made a verse by verse comparison of Yeats's translation with the original text of the *Isa Upaniṣad*, and objected to precisely that kind of poetic liberty which Mr. Masson had praised (the 'golden stopper in the bottle' replacing the 'lid' or 'disk' of the sun). This provoked classic exchanges on the duties of a translator—faithfulness or recreation.

It was becoming increasingly apparent that an issue of belief was determining various participants in their attitudes to Yeats (and Shri Purohit Swami). All agreed he was a poet of the earth, of the body. But several of those present felt that such a limitation could not produce the greatest poetry. Mr. McCutcheon had tended to extol Yeats at the expense of Eliot, which goaded Mr. Lal into differentiating poets of the 'higher dream' from those of the lower. The two papers of the second afternoon offered a striking confrontation of these

scholarship.

The Festival ended with a performance of *Resurrection* in the Bengali translation of Sudhindranath Datta, produced by Dr. Pranabendu Dasgupta (Jadavpur). Sudhindranath (1901-1960), an eminent Bengali poet, was a professor of this department of Comparative Literature. Professor Buddhadeva Bose, who was an intimate friend of Sudhindranath, introduced the great translation before the performance.

The festival ended with a short speech by Shri P. C. V. Mallik, the Registrar of the University. The organizers received invaluable assistance from the Ambassador of Ireland, the USIS, the British Council, National Library, and the Central Library of the University of Calcutta.

The papers of the Seminar will be published by the University.

—David McCutcheon.
(Associate-Director, Yeats Seminar)

of abstractions early in his career. Long before he met Rabindranath, he had refused the mystical ascetic India of AE and Mohini Chatterjee. For that reason he did not join the Dublin theosophists, and he only joined the London group in pursuit of occult *experience*. The second half of Dr. Guha's paper illuminated the Indian motifs which lie behind *The Shadowy Waters*—in preparation for the reading of this play, which took place that evening. Finally, Professor Amalendu Bose of Calcutta University, declaring himself an 'unashamed admirer' of the early poetry, surveyed the background of *In the Seven Woods*, which he considered the 'climacteric' of Yeats's poetry, and affirmed that Yeats had broken the traditional insularity of English poetry, giving a new dimension to Eliot's 'tradition'.

In a brief survey of the entire proceedings, Mr. McCutcheon felt that apart from the second morning and Dr. Guha's paper, the theme of 'Yeats and India' had been somewhat incidental. Dr. Kantak, for instance, had ventured only a tail-end comparison between Yeats's sexual theme and Indian tantric beliefs. Professor Bhalla had merely dwelt in passing on Yeats being 'half Greek and half Indian'. More such comparisons had fleetingly entered the various discussions, as for instance whether Yeats's preoccupation with personality was not quite contrary to the Indian pursuit of *moksha*. Naturally enough, few scholars felt sufficiently expert in both fields to explore in depth: we are still essentially Eng. Lit. men. There was a tendency to associate the Higher Dream with Indian transcendence and the lower with Western materialism: Dr. Sisir Ghose, drawing sustenance from Coomaraswami for the past and Sri Aurobindo for the future, had made quite clear his preference for Sri Krishna to the Swineherd! But except when there was occasion to contrast Mohini Chatterjee with Shri Purohit Swami, the Seminar did not keep properly distinct the *different* Indian traditions with which Yeats might be associated or contrasted. Dr. Amalendu Bose made the interesting charge that English critics, with their 'pragmatic' bias, are responsible for the insistence that Yeats pursued his Vision only for the metaphors; but we in India find this difficult to accept—Yeats was also seeking Truth, and Mr. Bhalla agreed: *A Vision* is not just a 'palace of symbols.' Like the Mysore Seminar in June 1965 on Critical Traditions, this Seminar also indicated the beginnings of an *Indian* approach to Western literature, or at least the possibility of specifically Indian insights, and the beginnings of emancipation from standard English

সেই কামনার প্রতীকরূপে ব্যবহার করেছেন। নাটকীয় গতির জন্তও ভ্রমরটির প্রয়োজন ছিল। একে আশ্রয় করেই রাজা বিশ্রুতলাপরত সখীদের মধ্যে প্রবেশ করলেন। এই বিশ্রুতলাপের সময় বন্ধপল্লব সহকারের সঙ্গে নবকুসুমযৌবন বন-জ্যোৎস্নার মিলিতরূপের প্রতি শকুন্তলার নিবন্ধদৃষ্টি ইঙ্গিতময়। শকুন্তলা মিলনাকাজক্ষী। অনন্ত্যার কাছ থেকে শকুন্তলার যে জন্মবৃত্তান্ত শোনা গেল তা আশ্রমের কঠোরতার মধ্যেও শকুন্তলার আশ্রমবিরুদ্ধ মতির পরিজ্ঞাপক।

প্রথম অঙ্কের শেষভাগে নেপথ্য থেকে ভীত আর্তনাদ উদ্ভিত হল : যুগয়াবিহারী পার্শ্বিৎ দুঃস্থ প্রত্যাশন্ন, তপোবনের প্রাণীগণকে রক্ষার জন্ত অগ্রসর হও, মূর্তিমান বিদ্যেয় মত একটি হস্তী ধর্মারণ্যে প্রবেশ করছে। এই হস্তীর যে ভয়ঙ্কর রূপ কালিদাস কয়েকটি শব্দের দ্বারা অঙ্কিত করেছেন তা ধর্মারণ্যে ভবিষ্যতে যে আলোড়ন উপস্থিত হবে তারই আভাস দিচ্ছে। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে রাজা দুঃস্থের ভাবী ভূমিকাও স্ফোটিত হচ্ছে।

দ্বিতীয় অঙ্কে আমরা রাজার বিরহী রূপ দেখি। বিদূষকের কাছে রাজা আপন হৃদয় উন্মুক্ত করেছেন, শকুন্তলার প্রতি গভীর অনুরাগের কথা বলেছেন। ব্যাপারটি বিদূষকের ভালো লাগেনি। তপোবনের ঐর্ষাদা এই প্রণয়লীলার নষ্ট হচ্ছে—তাই বিদূষকের তীব্র বিক্রপ, ‘আপনি দেখছি তপোবনকে উপবন বানালেন’। এই বিক্রপ কবি কালিদাসেরও।

রাজা শকুন্তলামিলনাকাজক্ষী। স্বযোগ উপস্থিত হল। ঋষিরা তাকে আশ্রমে আশ্রয় করেছেন যজ্ঞ নির্বিলম্ব করার জন্তে। কিন্তু সেই মুহূর্তেই রাজমাতার নিমন্ত্রণ এল দুঃস্থের কাছে। রাজার মন দ্বিধাকূল। শকুন্তলার আকর্ষণ তাকে আশ্রমের দিকে টানছে, অথচ এদিকে মাতৃ-আজ্ঞা। শকুন্তলাভিলাষই জয়ী হল। বিদূষককে আপন প্রতিনিধি করে রাজধানীতে মায়ের কাছে পাঠালেন। কিন্তু মনে ভয় হল, চপল ব্রাহ্মণ রাজাস্তম্ভপূরে গিয়ে আবার সব কথা ফাঁস করে না দেয়। তাই বিদ্যায় দেবার পূর্বে বিদূষকের হাত ধরে বললেন, “সখে, এতক্ষণ যা গল্প করলাম তা পরিহাসমাত্র ; সত্য, তাপসকণ্ঠা শকুন্তলায় আমার কোনো অভিলাষ নেই। ঋষিদের সম্মানরক্ষার্থেই আজ্ঞায়ে যাচ্ছি।” রাজা স্বকর্মকে নির্দোষ দেখাবার জন্ত শকুন্তলাকাহিনীকে ‘পরিহাস বিজ্ঞপ্তি’ বললেন। সাময়িকভাবে আত্মরক্ষা হল, কিন্তু এ-কথার ভাবী ফল সুদূরপ্রসারী ও ধর্মাস্তিক হয়েছিল। ষষ্ঠ অঙ্কে তার উল্লেখ আছে।

তৃতীয় অঙ্কে বেতসকূঞ্জে শকুন্তলার সঙ্গে রাজার মিলন হল। রাজা মোহগ্রস্ত, কর্তব্যব্রষ্ট। তৃতীয় অঙ্কের সর্বশেষ দৃশ্যে তাকে তার স্পষ্ট ইঙ্গিত পাই। তার মোহ টিংকার দিয়ে তাকাত্তে হ’ল, “কোথায় আপনি রাজা ? আমাদের যজ্ঞ যে বিঘ্নিত হচ্ছে।” রাজার মোহ তাত্তল, কিন্তু অপরাধ হয়ে গেছে।

শকুন্তলার নাট্যশিল্প

শকুন্তলা নাটকের আদিত্যে শিবস্তুতি, অন্তেষ্টে শিবস্তুতি । এ নাটকে সত্য শিব স্তবের অপর সমন্বয় ঘটেছে । এর তত্ত্ব এবং সৌন্দর্য নিয়ে বহু বিজ্ঞান আলোচনা করেছেন । আমরা এই ক্ষুদ্র প্রবন্ধে তার নাট্যশিল্প সম্বন্ধে একটু আলোচনা করব ।

নাটকের প্রস্তাবন' অংশের শেষে আছে : এষ রাজ্জৈব দুঃশস্তঃ সারেস্ফেণাতিরংহসা । এই কথাটুকু রঙ্গমঞ্চে পাত্রপ্রবেশ সূচিত করছে ; সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আর একটি বস্তু ধনিত হচ্ছে—দুর্বাসাঋষি দ্বারা শকুন্তলার কাছ থেকে রাজা দুঃশস্ত হত হবেন । 'সারঙ্গ' শব্দটির মধ্যে সেই ধনি নিহিত আছে ।

প্রস্তাবনার পর নাটক আরম্ভ হল । আশ্রমযুগকে রাজা অহুসরণ করছেন । শশিষ্ঠ বৈখানস রাজাকে নিবেদন করলেন : আশ্রমযুগোহয়ং ন হস্তব্যো ন হস্তব্যঃ । ন খলু ন খলু বাণঃ সন্নিপাত্যোহয়মস্মিন্ মৃদুনি যুগশবীরে তুলারামাবিবাগিঃ । এর ভেতর দিয়ে সমস্ত আশ্রম যেন দু'হাত তুলে রাজাকে নিবেদন করছে : যুগসবল যুগকোমল শকুন্তলার সর্বনাশ তুমি কোরো না । রাজা বাণ প্রতিসংহত করলেন । ঋষি আশীর্বাদ করলেন, 'রাজচক্রবর্তী পুত্র লাভ করুন' সর্বদমন ভরতের জন্ম সূচিত হল । দুঃশস্তকে আশ্রমে নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হলে কথ আশ্রমে আছেন কিনা রাজা প্রশ্ন করলেন । উত্তরে ঋষি বললেন—দুহিতা শকুন্তলার উপর অতিথি সংকাবে তার অর্পণ করে তারই প্রতিকূল দৈব উপশমের জন্তু কথ সোমতীর্থে গেছেন । শকুন্তলার ভবিষ্যৎ দৈব-দুর্বিপাকের টঙ্কিত কালিদাস এইভাবে দিলেন ।

নিমন্ত্রিত রাজা আশ্রমে গিয়েছেন । সেখানে আলবালে জলসেচনরতা শকুন্তলাকে দেখবার পূর্বেই আশ্রম প্রবেশমুখে তাঁর বাহুক্ষুরিত হয়েছিল । বাহুক্ষুরণ বরাদ্দনা পাণ্ডের সূচক । রাজা একটু আশ্চর্য হলেন, কিন্তু ভবিতব্যানাং দ্বাৱাণি ভবন্তি সর্বত্র । শকুন্তলার প্রতি রাজা আকৃষ্ট হলেন । এই আকর্ষণ যদিও রাজার আর্ষমনের দ্বারা পরিমার্জিত, তবুও কামনার উদগ্রতা সেখানে বিরাজমান । একটি ভ্রমরকে কালিদাস

রাজচরিত্রের একটা দিক এমন নিপুণভাবে উদ্ঘাটিত করল যে আমরা শকুন্তলার ভবিষ্যৎ ভেবে শঙ্কিত হয়ে উঠলুম। রাজা বিদূষককে হংসপাদিকার কাছে পাঠালেন। নাটকীয়ত্বের প্রয়োজনে কালিদাস স্বকৌশলে অষ্টম অঙ্ক থেকে বিদূষককে সরিয়ে দিলেন। বিদূষক থাকলে শকুন্তলা প্রত্যাখ্যানের সময় রাজাকে দ্বিতীয় অঙ্কে বিবৃত কাহিনী শ্রবণ করিয়ে দিতেন।

রাজা কিংবা শকুন্তলা অভিষেকের কথা জানতেন না। আমাদের কৃতকর্মের ক্ষুদ্র অথচ অমোঘগতি চিরদিনই আমাদের অজ্ঞাত। মানবজীবনের এইটিই সবচেয়ে বড় রহস্য। একেই আমরা অদৃষ্ট বা নিয়তি বলি। হংসপাদিকার গান রাজার অবচেতন মনে আলোড়ন তুলেছিল।

তচ্চেতসা স্মরতি নুনমবোধপূর্বং
ভাবস্থিরাণি জননাস্তর সৌহৃদানি।

রাজার মন পর্যাকুল হয়ে উঠল, প্রায় সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সস্ত্রীক কণ্ঠশিষ্টদ্বয়ের আগমনবার্তা ঘোষিত হল। রাজা শঙ্কিত হয়ে উঠলেন, কি জানি কি অপরাধ করে বসেছেন।

শকুন্তলা প্রত্যাখ্যাত হলেন। অভিজ্ঞান-অস্মরীয়ক শচীতীর্থে অবগাহনের সময় শকুন্তলার আঙ্গুল থেকে খসে পড়েছে। রক্ষাকবচটিও নেই। থাকতে পায়েও না। কর্মফল দুর্বীর।

এই অঙ্কে রাজার অন্তর্দ্বন্দ্ব কালিদাস অতি চমৎকার ভাবে ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন। মৌন্দর্ঘ্যের প্রতি রাজার লোভ ছিল। হংসপাদিকার গীত তার প্রমাণ। রাজা ইচ্ছা করলেই শকুন্তলাকে লাভ করতে পারতেন। কিন্তু রাজকীয় মর্যাদাবোধ, তাপস-কন্ডাষ, এবং সম্ভবতঃ আর্থময় বাধা হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল। রাজার দোলাচল চিত্ত আমরা বুঝতে পারি : ন খলুসপদি ভোক্তুং নাপি শক্নোমি যোক্তুং। প্রত্যাখ্যাতা শকুন্তলা পিতৃগৃহেও স্থান পেলেন না; শাস্ত্রব্রত তাকে বুঝিয়ে দিলেন তার মোহগ্রস্ততার ফল তাকে ভুগতেই হবে।

রাজার অন্তর্দ্বন্দ্ব এখন অন্তরূপ ধরল। শকুন্তলার পূর্বাপর ব্যবহার তাকে সন্দেহাতুল করে তুলল। তিনি কি তাহলে এই তাপস কন্ডাকে সত্যসত্যই বিবাহ করেছিলেন? তাকে প্রত্যাখ্যান করে কি তিনি অপরাধী হলেন? কিংকর্তব্যবিমূঢ় রাজা পুরোহিতগণের তাঁর কর্তব্য জিজ্ঞাসা করলেন। পুরোহিত একটি উপায় নির্ধারণ করলেন। সম্ভান প্রসব পর্যন্ত শকুন্তলা পুরোহিতগৃহে থাকবেন; যদি শকুন্তলা রাজচক্রবর্তী-লক্ষণোপেত সম্ভান প্রসব করেন তাহলে বুঝতে হবে সে সম্ভান দুহস্তের ঔরসের, কারণ সাধুদ্বা বলেছেন দুহস্তের প্রথম পুত্র চক্রবর্তী-লক্ষণযুক্ত হবে।

কর্তব্য-জ্ঞানের শাস্তি ক্রোধের ভিতর দিয়ে আসে। দুর্বাসা সেই ক্রোধের প্রতীক। সমগ্র সংস্কৃতসাহিত্যে দুর্বাসা তা-ই।

দুজনেই অপরাধী। দুঃশস্ত এবং শকুন্তলা। একজন মোহগ্রস্ত হয়ে আত্মপ্রেমতার স্বযোগ নিয়ে, কথের অল্পপস্থিতিতে তপোবনের ধর্ম এবং মর্যাদা ভঙ্গ করে রাজকর্তব্যভ্রষ্ট হয়েছেন। অন্যজন গুরুজনের অগোচরে কল্যাণকামী স্নেহশীল পালকপিতার অল্পপস্থিতিতে অজ্ঞাতস্বভাবে পুরুষের কাছে আত্মসমর্পণ করেছেন এবং এত মোহগ্রস্ত হয়েছেন যে তাঁর উপর অর্পিত অতিথি সংবর্ধনার পবিত্র দায়িত্ব লঙ্ঘন করেছেন। প্রথম অঙ্কের প্রারম্ভেই তদানীন্তন ভারতবর্ষের এই দায়িত্বের কথা উল্লিখিত হয়েছে। দুঃশস্ত-শকুন্তলা—দুজনেই বিশ্বাসঘাতক। অতএব অতি স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই চতুর্থ অঙ্কে দুর্বাসার অভিশাপ এল। এ-অভিশাপ আকস্মিক কিংবা বহিরারোপিত নয়। চতুর্থ অঙ্কের প্রারম্ভে কথশিষ্টের উচ্চারিত তিনটি শ্লোকে এর ভাবী ঘটনা সূচিত হয়েছে।

চতুর্থ অঙ্কে দেখি কথ ফিরে এসে অশরীরী বাণীর কাছ থেকে দুঃশস্ত-শকুন্তলার গান্ধর্ব বিবাহ এবং অন্তঃসত্ত্বা শকুন্তলার সংবাদ পেয়েছেন। প্রিয়ংবদার মুখে কথের অভিনন্দনও শুনি। কিন্তু সেই অভিনন্দনের ভাষা লক্ষ্য করবার মত। “দিটিআ ধূমাউলিদি দিটিনো বি জঅমাণস পাজএ এক্স আহদী পড়িদা।” ধূমাকুলিত নয়ন হলেও কপালগুণে যজ্ঞমানের আছতি যজ্ঞাগ্নিতে পড়েছে। এ-অভিনন্দনে পিতার ভিন্নস্বার তীব্র। অগত্যা বিবাহ স্বীকার করে নিলেও কণ্ঠার হঠকারিতায় কথ অত্যন্ত অসন্তুষ্ট হয়েছেন।

শকুন্তলার পতিগৃহে যাত্রার প্রাক্কালে সকলে জলাশয়তীরে দাঁড়িয়েছেন। জলাশয়ে পদ্মপত্রের অন্তরালে চক্রবাক লুকিয়ে আছে, চক্রবাকী তাকে খুঁজে না-পেয়ে চিৎকার করছে। শকুন্তলার মন আশঙ্কিত হয়ে উঠল। সখীদ্বয়ের দৃষ্টি সেদিকে আকৃষ্ট করে বললেন : হলা, দুঃকরং অহং করেমি—আমিও দুঃকরকর্ম করতে যাচ্ছি। শকুন্তলা জানলেন না অজ্ঞাতে কী সর্বনাশ। কথা তার মুখ দিয়ে বেরিয়ে এল। অপূর্ব নাটকীয় পরিহাসের (Dramatic irony) সৃষ্টি করলেন কালিদাস। এ-আশঙ্কা অননুয়া প্রিয়ংবদাকেও আক্রান্ত করল। তারা শকুন্তলাকে বলে দিলেন রাজা যদি তাকে চিনতে না পারেন, তবে যেন অভিজ্ঞান অঙ্গুরীয়ক দেখান। মুখে শকুন্তলাকে মাধবনা দিয়ে বললেন, স্নেহ পাপশঙ্কী,—এ জন্মেই অঙ্গুরীয়ক দেখানোর কথা বললুম।

পঞ্চম অঙ্ক অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। নাটকীয় ঘটনা এখানে শীর্ষবিন্দুতে আরোহন করেছে। প্রারম্ভেই হংসপাদিকার গান। বিদূষক রাজাকে প্রশ্ন করলেন : গীতির অর্থ প্রকৃতভাবে বুঝতে পেরেছেন কি? রাজা বললেন—সকলকৃতপ্রণয়োইয়ংজনঃ। চতুর্থ অঙ্কে শকুন্তলার আশঙ্কিত, অথচ প্রত্যাশী মন পাঠকহৃদয়কে ভারাকুল করে তুলেছিল, তবুও একটা আশা ছিল পাঠকের মনে যে আংটিটা তো রয়েছে, কিন্তু হংসপাদিকার গীত

আসন্নসম্মতি ছিলেন ; তাকে প্রত্যাখ্যান করে তিনি নিজ সন্তানকেও হারিয়েছেন । এ-দুঃখকে কালিদাস আরো তীব্র করলেন সার্থবাহী ধনমিত্রের কাহিনী দ্বারা ।

রাজা অকর্মণ্য, নিস্তেজ হয়ে গেছেন । রাজকার্য করবারও সামর্থ্য নেই আর । বিরহ ব্যথা ভুলবার জন্যে বিদূষকের সঙ্গে বসে শকুন্তলার ছবি আঁকেন । যে রাজা প্রেমকে স্বীকার করেননি, ভোগকেই একান্ত বলে জানতেন, অহুতাপানলে দগ্ধ হয়ে চোখের জলে প্রায়শ্চিত্ত করেও তিনি শান্তি পাচ্ছেন না । খামাদের মন রাজার দুঃখে আর্দ্র হয়ে ওঠে । পঞ্চম অঙ্কের শেষে শকুন্তলা-প্রত্যাখ্যান এবং তার অলৌকিক অন্তর্ধান এক বিষাদক্লিন্ন পরিবেশের সৃষ্টি করেছিল । ষষ্ঠ অঙ্কে হতভাগ্য রাজার দৈন্তে এক বেদনাবিধুর পরিবেশের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে । চারিদিক নৈরাশ্রে ভরা । ঠিক এমনি মুহূর্তে কালিদাস সকলকে মচকিত করে তুললেন । বিদূষক মাধব্য প্রাসাদ শিখরে কোনো অদৃশ্য পুরুষের দ্বারা হঠাৎ আক্রান্ত হয়ে তারস্বরে আর্তনাদ করে উঠলেন । বিষাদক্লিষ্ট বিক্রম রাজার লুপ্ত তেজ জলে উঠল । মাতলির কাণ্ড । তিনি এসেছেন রাজাকে স্বর্গে নিয়ে যেতে । রাজাকে ইন্দ্রের পক্ষে যুদ্ধ করতে হবে । নিষ্ক্রিয় রাজাকে মাতলি ক্ষাত্ৰ-ভেজে উদ্দীপিত করে তুললেন ।

তারপর সপ্তম ও শেষ অঙ্ক । দেবাসুরের যুদ্ধশেষে বিজয়ী রাজা পুষ্পকরথে নিজের রাজ্যে ফিরে আসছেন । সারথি মাতলি । মেঘলোকে রথ অবতীর্ণ হয়েছে এমন সময় আকাশে পর্বতগাত্রে মারীচের আশ্রম দৃষ্ট হল । পথক্রমে মারীচের আশ্রমের কাছ দিয়ে আসছেন । তাঁকে প্রদক্ষিণ করে সম্মান না-দেখিয়ে চলে এলে প্রত্যবায় ঘটবে । তিনি সকল দেবতার পিতা । স্তবরাং রথ থামল । মাতলি সংবাদ নিয়ে জানলেন দক্ষ মারীচ নিজপত্নী দাক্ষায়ণী এবং অন্যান্য ঋষিপত্নীদের কাছে পাতিব্রত্যাধর্মের ব্যাখ্যান করছেন । কালিদাস ষষ্ঠ অঙ্ক থেকেই দুঃস্বপ্ন-শকুন্তলার পুনর্মিলনের ক্ষেত্র প্রস্তুত করছিলেন । সপ্তম অঙ্কে মিলন প্রায় আসন্ন । সে-মিলনের পরিবেশ সৃষ্ট হচ্ছে পাতিব্রত্যা ধর্ম ব্যাখ্যানের দ্বারা । আমাদের প্রাচীন সাহিত্যে আদর্শ দম্পতী হর-পার্বতী, বশিষ্ঠ-অম্বকুতী, দক্ষ-দাক্ষায়ণী, রাম-সীতা । দক্ষ-দাক্ষায়ণীর আশীর্বাদ-পূত হয়ে দুঃস্বপ্ন-শকুন্তলার মিলন ঘটল । এ-মিলনের সেতু প্রত্যক্ষভাবে সর্বদমন ।

কালিদাস অতি নিপুণভাবে, অপূর্বকলাকৌশলে সর্বদমনের সঙ্গে রাজাকে মিলিত করলেন । একটি খেলনার শকুন্তকে অবলম্বন করে শকুন্তলার নাট্যোক্তাংশ, সিংহাসিতর সঙ্গে ধ্বস্তাধ্বস্তিতে সর্বদমনের রক্ষাকবচ মাটিতে পড়ে যাওয়া, দুঃস্বপ্ন দেখল সেই দক্ষায়ণী মাটি থেকে তুললেন তখন সাপ হয়ে তাকে দংশন না-করা, তাপনীঘরের বিশিষ্ট হওয়া এবং শকুন্তলাকে সংবাদ দেওয়া যে সম্ভবতঃ সর্বদমনের পিতা ইন্দি—বটমাতলি পর পর অতি স্বাভাবিকভাবে নাটকীয় কৌশলে কালিদাস সাধিয়েছেন । আশা-মিথাসার

ক্রন্দনপরা শকুন্তলাকে নিয়ে পুরোহিত গ্রহণ করলেন, কিন্তু এক অলৌকিক কাণ্ড ঘটল। জ্যোতির্ময়ী এক স্ত্রীমূর্তি এসে শকুন্তলাকে নিয়ে শূণ্যমার্গে অপ্সরাভীর্ষের দিকে চলে গেল। আমরা এখানে স্মরণ করতে পারি যে শকুন্তলা অপ্সরা মেনকার কন্যা। কালিদাস কেন শকুন্তলাকে রাজপুরোহিতগৃহে রাখলেন না? এ-প্রশ্নের উত্তর মধুম অঙ্কে এবং শকুন্তলা নাটকের সামগ্রিক ফলোদয়ে পাওয়া যাবে।

এ ঘটনার প্রায় পাঁচ বৎসর পরে ষষ্ঠ অঙ্কের কাহিনী। সময় বসন্তকাল। সহৃদয় পাঠকচিত্ত স্বাভাবিকভাবেই বিষাদগ্রস্ত। সকলেরই মনে জিজ্ঞাসা শকুন্তলা কোথায়? কী তার বর্তমান অবস্থা? এই বিষাদভার এবং অসহনীয় নৈঃশব্দ্যকে লঘু করবার জন্মেই ষষ্ঠ অঙ্কের প্রবেশকে রাজশাল, প্রহরী এবং ধীবরের দৃশ্য। কালিদাস পাঠকচিত্তকে একটু কৌতুকরসের জারক দিয়ে লঘু করে তুললেন, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে একটি অভাবনীয় আনন্দসংবাদ আমাদের দিলেন। নিতাস্ত দৈবানুগ্রহে অভিজ্ঞান অঙ্গুরীয়ক ফিরে পাওয়া গেছে এবং মুহূর্ত মধ্যে রাজা বিশ্বরণমুক্ত হয়েছেন।

এই অঙ্কের প্রথমেই কালিদাস একটি বিশেষ চরিত্রের অবতারণা করলেন। শকুন্তলা-দৃশ্যস্তের পুনর্মিলন ব্যাপারে এ-চরিত্রের ভূমিকা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। মেনকা সাহুমতীকে বলে দিয়েছেন সে যেন দেখে আসে শকুন্তলার প্রতি রাজার মনোভাব বর্তমানে কিরূপ। আমরা জানলাম শকুন্তলা যেখানেই থাকুন তিনি মেনকার দ্বারা সুরক্ষিত। নিস্তর রাজপুরীকে দেখে সাহুমতী আশ্চর্য হলেন। কিন্তু ধীরে ধীরে জানলেন শকুন্তলা-বিরহকাতর বিবেকদষ্ট অপরাধী রাজা বসন্তোৎসব বন্ধ করে দিয়েছেন। সাহুমতী রাজাকে দেখলেন। এই সেই সক্রুৎ-সক্রুৎ-প্রণয়কারী গর্বিত দৃশ্যস্ত? প্রজাগরকৃশ, বিবর্ণমূর্তি, দুর্ভাগা রাজাকে দেখে সাহুমতীর হৃদয় সহানুভূতিশীল হয়ে উঠল। আহা, শকুন্তলার প্রতি এত প্রেম? কী হয়েছিল তখন? দৃশ্যস্ত-বিদূষকের আলাপ থেকে সাহুমতী বিশ্বরণের ব্যাপার অবগত হলেন। রাজার তাহলে দোষ নেই। শকুন্তলাকে গিয়ে সব কথা বলতে হবে। কালিদাস পুনর্মিলনের ক্ষেত্র প্রস্তুত করছেন। সাহুমতীর কাছ থেকে আমরা দৃশ্যস্ত-শকুন্তলার অচির মিলনেরও সংবাদ পাই।

সমগ্র ষষ্ঠ অঙ্ক রাজার চোখের জলে ভরা। এক সময় বিদূষককে বললেন, তুমি তো সব জানতে সখা, কেন তুমি আমাকে শকুন্তলা-ব্যাপার মনে করিয়ে দিলে না। দ্বিতীয় অঙ্কে রাজাকে নিয়ে বিদূষক যতই পরিহাস করে থাকুন, ষষ্ঠ অঙ্কে তিনি অকৃত্রিম দয়াদী-বয়স্র। ব্যাখ্যাতরা কণ্ঠে বললেন : জানতুম সবই, কিন্তু অবশেষে তুমি যে বললে শকুন্তলা-কাহিনী পরিহাস-বিজ্ঞপ্তিত। আমার মাটির বুদ্ধি তোমার শেষ কথাই সত্য বলে ধরে নিয়েছিল।

রাজার হৃৎকের আর একটি বড় কারণ ছিল, তিনি নিঃসন্তান। শকুন্তলা

WE record our great sorrow at the death of our valued colleague Professor Narendranath Bhattacharya in October, 1965. An excellent Sanskritist he was the oldest member of the Faculty, and though he had joined us quite late in life accepted the demands of this new discipline with the enthusiasm and ardour of a young man. As a genuine teaching scholar he earned love and respect alike from his colleagues and students. A simple, shy, and religious man, he was a constant reminder for us of the old world grace and humility. From the first number of this journal he had been a regular contributor. We sadly remember that he could not complete the book he intended to write where he would have applied the comparatist's method to Bengali literature. We are publishing in this number the last article he wrote.

Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature (JJCL) is attracting attention in academic and intellectual circles abroad. The current issue of the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* (Number 14) published at Indiana University, U.S.A., has a half-page report on JJCL, 4. *The Times Literary Supplement* in a review article last year (March 12, 1964) mentioned JJCL as an indispensable tool of Comparative Literature along with the *Revue de littérature comparée*, *The Yearbook*, *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich*, and *Hikaku Bungaku*.

The new Comparative Literature journal *Comparative Literature Studies* (published by the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, U.S.A.) is in its second year now. It is a critical quarterly and is devoted particularly to literary history and history of ideas. Another new Comparative Literature journal—the first German one after Max Koch and Ludwig Geiger's *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte* nearly fifty years ago—is about to come out: *Arcadia*. It will be published by Walter de Gruyter and Co., Berlin.

দ্বন্দ্বে দোহলায়মানচিত্ত শকুন্তলা ধীরে ধীরে এসে উপস্থিত হলেন;—কালিদাস তাঁর বিরহত্রতচারিণী মূর্তি এঁকেছেন :

বসনে পরিধূসরে বসানা
নিয়মক্ষামমুখী ধৃতৈকবেনি ।

মেনকা শকুন্তলাকে সর্বদমনের জন্মের পূর্বেই মারীচের আশ্রমে এনে দিয়েছিলেন । দীর্ঘ তপস্তা এবং বিরহদুঃখের দাবদাহে শকুন্তলার মোহমুক্তি ঘটেছে । প্রেম এখন অগ্নিস্তব্ধ সংঘত । দুঃস্থের পক্ষেও তাই । এই প্রেম কল্যাণধর্মী, সর্বতোভদ্র ।

এই মুহূর্তে রাজার ক্লশ বিবর্ণ মূর্তি দেখে শকুন্তলার হৃদয় ব্যথায় ঝেঁদে উঠল । কিছুক্ষণ পূর্বেই তিনি পাতিত্রতা ধর্ম-মাহাত্ম্য শুনে এসেছেন । স্মরণ্য রাজা যখন শকুন্তলার পায়ে পড়ে ক্ষমা ভিক্ষা করলেন, শকুন্তলা সে-অবস্থা সহ করতে পারলেন না । হৃ'হাত দিয়ে রাজাকে ধরে ওঠালেন ।

কিন্তু এ-মিলনকে আরো পূত, আরো সুদৃঢ় করবার জন্য সপুত্র রাজদম্পতীকে আদর্শ দেবদম্পতীর সম্মুখে কালিদাস উপস্থিত করলেন । সেখানে দুজনে দুর্বাসার অভিশাপের কথা শুনলেন । কারো মনে আর কোনো মানি রইল না ।

শকুন্তলায় কালিদাসের নাট্যকৌশল অপূর্ব । কোথাও কোনো অস্বাভাবিকতা নেই । শকুন্তলা নাটকের মর্মবাণী কালিদাসের শ্রেষ্ঠ ভাষ্যকার রবীন্দ্রনাথ আমাদের বলেছেন । নতুন করে কিছু বলবার কেউ আছেন কিংবা আসবেন কিনা জানি না ; তবে কাল নিরবধি এবং পৃথিবী বিপুলা ।

Université de Paris (Sorbonne)—Charles Dédéyan, René
 Etiemble and Jacques Voisine.
 Université de Lyon—Jean Bruneau.
 Université de Strasbourg—Jacques Roos.
 Université de Dijon—René Ternois.
 Université de Bordeaux—Robert Escarpit.
 Université de Toulouse—André Monchoux.
 Université de Lille—Jean de Palacio.
 Université de Clermont-Ferrand—Jacques Cadot.
 Université de Rennes—Yvonne Batard.
 Université de Aix-en-Provence—André M. Rousseau.
 Université de Nancy—Zygmunt Markiewicz.
 Université de Poitiers—Hélène Tuzet.
 Université de Grenoble—Victor del Litto.
 Université de Montpellier—Henri-Francois Imbert.

Although Germany has produced such eminent comparatists as Auerbach and Curtius, the number of West German universities with chairs in Comparative Literature is still very small:

Tübingen—Kurt Wais.
 Mainz—(vacant).
 Saarbrücken—Roger Bauer.
 Technische Hochschule, Darmstadt—Walter Naumann.

The number is smaller in England, only two as yet have any post in Comparative Literature: Manchester and Essex.

But Comparative Literature is quite popular in Japan. Not that all Japanese universities and colleges offer courses in this discipline. In fact only two do: the University of Tokyo and the Tokyo Women's Christian College. But the Comparative Literature Society in Japan is quite an influential body. It draws members from all literature disciplines, holds regular meetings and publishes a journal: *Hikaku Bungaku* (Comparative Literature). For more information see Saburo Ota's article on 'Comparative Literature in Japan' in *JJCL*, 3.

The Fourth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association was held last year (Aug. 31—Sept. 5, 1964) at Fribourg, Switzerland. Nearly three hundred participants from all over the world were present and two general themes were discussed: "Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Literature" and "Definition and Illustration of Literary Terms Related to the Notions of Imitation, Originality and Influence." The next Congress will be held in 1967 in Belgrade. Belgrade has been a good choice, it will bring the comparatists of the "two" worlds closer. It should be mentioned in this connection

The department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur has introduced in 1965 some significant changes in the post graduate syllabus. Alternative courses are now offered for non-Bengali and foreign students. (One American student and another from Mysore are studying this year for their M.A. degrees.) Here is the revised course of post graduate studies:

- Paper I—(a) *Classical Background of Medieval Bengali literature*; or,
 (b) *The influence of Sanskrit Literature on Modern Bengali Literature*; or,
 (c) *Sanskrit Drama and Greek Tragedy* (for non-Bengali students).
- Paper II—(a) *Epic Literatures* (Eastern and Western);
 (b) *Dante and Medieval Literature*.
- Paper III—(a) *The Impact of Western Literature on Bengali literature*; or,
 (b) *Rabindranath* (in Bengali); or,
 (c) *Rabindranath in Translation* (for non-Bengali students).
- IV—(a) *Shakespearian Drama and European Classical Drama*; or,
 (b) *Shakespeare and the Romantic Drama*.
- V—(a) *The Literature of the Enlightenment*; or,
 (b) *Goethe*.
- Paper VI— *Romanticism and Symbolis in Nineteenth Century Western Poetry*.
- Paper VII—(a) *The European Novel up to the End of Nineteenth Century*; or,
 (b) *Western Drama Since 1850*;
 (c) *The Modern Novel*; or,
 (d) *Modern Western Poetry in the Twentieth Century*.
- Paper VIII— Essay in English or Bengali.

Bengali students must answer at least two papers in English and two in Bengali; the rest may be answered in either language. Non-Bengali and foreign students may answer all the papers in English, though they will be expected to take a course in elementary Bengali.

To continue (as we promised to our Indian readers in the last issue) with our information on Comparative Literature abroad, most French Universities teach this discipline. The following is a list of the more important ones with the names of persons holding chairs:

in the original Bengali, so he set out to learn that language too—largely self-taught. Apart from Bengali, Dr. Zbavitel also reads Hindi fluently.

In 1958 he visited India for the first time, staying six months at Santiniketan, where he worked in Rabindra Sadana, and translated *Gorā* in his leisure hours. In 1960 he toured extensively in East Bengal as a UNESCO scholar collecting folk songs on a research project. In 1961 he organized the Tagore Centenary celebrations in Czechoslovakia, and visited India too on that occasion to deliver lectures on Rabindrasāhitya in Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, and Midnapore. In 1963 Calcutta University published his book *Bengali Folk Ballads from Mymensingh and the Problem of their Authenticity*, and invited him to lecture on that subject. Up to now he has written seven books, including, apart from those already mentioned, a monograph on Tagore. He has also translated 22 books from Bengali into Czech or Slovak. These include twelve by Rabindranath (among them *Gorā*, *Two Sisters*, *Shesher Kavita*, *Letters from Russia*, *Boyhood Days*, several plays, and three anthologies—of poems, stories, and essays), two novels by Manik Bandyopadhyay, two by Narayan Ganguli, the first volume of Sarat Chandra's *Srikānta*, and a number of anthologies.

In our Department Dr. Zbavitel gave a series of lectures on *The Rise of Modern Literature in Asia and especially Bengal*. He laid great stress on his methodology, which is to study literature scientifically as a 'social phenomenon'. His concern was not to evaluate this literature, but to catalogue its common characteristics and point to the common conditions underlying its rise in Persia, India, China, and Japan. Dr. Zbavitel's interest extends equally to the best and poorest literature, in fact the most popular, however bad, (e.g. Bengali *Kavigān*) may be the most symptomatic and therefore the most sociologically interesting. But Dr. Zbavitel also loves literature for its own sake, from Vergil to Kafka, and recalls that it was the appeal of Rabindranath's poetry which first drew him into his chosen career. A condensed version of his lectures will be published in our next issue.

—David McCutcheon

The department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur was established in 1956 with Professor Buddhadeva Bose as its Chairman. The first batch of students took their degrees in 1958. Since then the following seven students of this department have been abroad for higher studies on foreign Government scholarships, fellowships, or teaching assistantships from foreign universities. *Sm. Navaneeta Sen* ('58) took a second M.A. from Harvard, U.S.A., and a Ph.D. from Indiana where she wrote her dissertation on the reception of Rabindranath Tagore in England, France, Germany and the United States. Currently she is working on

that Comparative Literature is becoming more and more popular in Eastern Europe. In 1962 the East European comparatists held a conference ("Conférence de la littérature comparée de Europe orientale") in Budapest to which delegates came from not only the socialist countries (except China and Albania) but Belgium, Switzerland, France and the Netherlands. W. A. P. Smit (Utrecht) was also present as the ex-officio co-president of the ICLA.

The Tenth Congress of the International Federation of Modern Languages and Literatures is going to be held next year (Aug.29—Sept. 3, 1966) at Strasbourg. The last Congress of the Federation, it may be recalled, was held in New York in 1963 in which Professor Buddhadeva Bose of Jadavpur participated. Also in next year is scheduled the Fourth Conference on "Oriental-Western Literary and Cultural Relations" on the Indiana University (USA) campus from June 21 to 25, 1966.

The Department of Comparative literature at Jadavpur was honoured to receive Dr. Dusan Zbavitel, Principal of the Indological and South East Asian Department of the Oriental Institute in Prague, Professor of Bengali at the Charles University, and editor of the English language bimonthly *New Orient*, as Visiting Lecturer during the months of December, 1965 and January, 1966. From 1945 Dr. Zbavitel studied Indology and Comparative Indo-European Philology at the Charles University in Prague under Professor Dr. V. Lesny, and took his Ph.D. in 1948 with a thesis on *The Verbal Aspect in Avesta, Old Persian, and Vedic Sanskrit*. Since then he has specialized in Bengali language and literature. At the Prague University he teaches a regular 5-year Diploma course in Bengali, for which he has written a textbook published in 1953. He plans to bring out an English edition of this Bengali language teacher in the near future. Currently he is leading a group of Czech Orientologists studying on a comparative basis the rise of modern literatures in various Asian countries.

Dr. Zbavitel was attracted to the study of languages from his schooldays, when he took private lessons in English and Russian apart from the compulsory French, German and Latin (his favourite subject). To these he added Ancient Greek, Sanskrit (+ Pali and Prakrit), Slavonic, Old Persian and Avesta, and even a little Old English and Aramaic, when he took up Comparative Philology at the University. As a student he read the complete *Mahābhārata* in Sanskrit (5 hours a day: 1½ years). His attention had been drawn to Bengali literature as a 15 year old schoolboy when he read Rabindranath in Czech translation (*Gitanjali*, *The Gardener*, from English versions). Professor Lesny told him that Rabindranath could only be properly appreciated

the universal man. His pilgrimage will not end in observing other pilgrims, for he will behold the god whom all pilgrims are seeking. Likewise, what really claims our attention in World-Literature is the way in which the soul of man expresses its joy through the written word and the forms which he chooses to give to his eternal being. Whether he portrays himself as a sick man or a voluptuary or an ascetic—the impulse is always the same, and that is his joy in uniting himself with the world. It is in order to realise the truth of this relationship that we must enter the world of letters. It is absurd to think of literature as artificial; it is a world whose science no individual can ever master; as in the world of matter, its process of creation is perpetual; and yet in the heart of this ever-unfinished creation there is an ideal of stillness and completion. What I am trying to say amounts to this. Just as this earth is not the sum of patches of land belonging to different people, and to know the earth as such is sheer rusticity, so literature is not the mere total of works composed of different hands. Most of us, however, think of literature in what I have called the manner of the rustic. From this narrow provincialism we must free ourselves; we must strive to see the work of each author as a whole, that whole as a part of man's universal creativity, and that universal spirit in its manifestations through World-Literature. Now is the time to do so...."

(Tr. Buddhadeva Bose in
Literature, No. 8)

of Comparative and General

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"A professor of any national literature is incompletely equipped unless he knows also much of other literatures, though the fact is less recognized than in the case of political history; instruction in literature generally is still parochial, as if our parish were all the world. Change, nevertheless, is taking place; and thus it has come about that greater acquaintance has everywhere arisen with foreign literature, and with it as a natural consequence has come a new and powerful application of the comparative method to literature on a great scale. It is this fresh, broad and fruitful application of the method that is signaled by the rise of the study which has taken this new name [Comparative Literature], and thus the study has come to imply generally, though needlessly, the application of the method to two or more literatures." (From the editorial by George E. Woodberry in *The Journal of Comparative Literature* (1903), New York. Courtesy: *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, No. 11, 1962.)

Sections II, IV, and V have been compiled by Shri **Amya Devi**.
Editorial assistance for this number has been given by
Mr. David McCutcheon.

the *Rāmāyana* as an oral epic. In the last Orientalists' Conference at New Delhi she read a paper related to her present work. She has been awarded a Senior Fellowship by the University Grants Commission in India. *Pranabendu Dasgupta* ('58), currently a teacher in the Department, has studied at the Universities of North Carolina (M.A.) and Minnesota (Ph.D.), U.S.A. He has written his Master's thesis on E. E. Cummings, and doctoral dissertation on Rabindranath Tagore and W. B. Yeats as dramatists. *Sm. Jharna Das* ('60), attended the University of Aix-en-Provence in France for a year studying in particular Voltaire on India. She is now at Sorbonne, Paris, working on her dissertation on the Impact of Symbolism on Modern Bengali Poetry. *Kalikaprasad Bannerjee* ('61), is at present teaching at a college in North Dakota, U.S.A., after taking another M.A. from the University of Washington. His Master's thesis was on Spenser and Aristotle's *Poetics*. *Amiya Dev* ('58), now a teacher on leave, is now writing his doctoral dissertation at Indiana, U.S.A., on a comparison of some Sanskrit and Shakespearian plays. We expect to print a part of this dissertation in the next number of the journal. Mr. Dev has travelled to the United States as a Fulbright scholar. Another ex-student, *Sm. Damayanti Ghose* ('62), also is working at Indiana on a University Fellowship for her Ph.D. The subject of her dissertation is the Indian influence on T. S. Eliot. Both Sm. Ghosh and Mr. Dev are returning to India this year. A seventh ex-student, *Deepak Kumar Majumdar* ('59), who has taught in the Department for some time, has this year joined the State University of Iowa, U.S.A., on a University grant.

We are happy our ex-students are doing highly satisfactory work in foreign universities.

—N.G.

On Record

(From an extension lecture delivered by Rabindranath Tagore at the National Council of Education, Jadavpur, in 1906.)

"I have been called upon to discuss a subject to which you have given the English name of Comparative Literature. Let me call it World-Literature in Bengali.

If we want to understand man as revealed in action, his motivations and his aims, then we must pursue his intentions through the whole of history. To take isolated instances, such as the reign of Akbar or Queen Elizabeth, is merely to satisfy curiosity. He who knows that Akbar and Elizabeth are only pretexts or occasions, that man throughout the whole of history is incessantly at work to fulfil his deepest purposes and to unite himself with the All—it is he, I say, who will strive to see in history not the local and the individual, but the eternal and

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Joseph T. F. Jordens, a Belgian by birth, did his Ph.D. at Louvain University on the *Bhagavadgītā* and spent some years in India doing post-doctoral work in Sanskrit. Currently he is a senior lecturer in the Department of Indian Studies of the University of Melbourne in Australia giving courses in Sanskrit Literature and Hindu and Buddhist thought.

Walter Veit, who studied at Cologne and Tübingen, and received Ph.D. in 1962 with a dissertation on a problem in Comparative Literature, taught for two years at the University of Ceylon, and now teaches foreign students at the University in Aachen in West Germany. The present article was read as a seminar lecture in the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur.

B. K. Matilal studied Sanskrit literature and Indian Philosophy at the University of Calcutta and taught Sanskrit for eight years at the Government Sanskrit College. From 1962-65 he studied analytic philosophy and logic at Harvard. He has just been appointed Assistant Professor of Sanskrit at Toronto University. His book *The Navya-nyaya Doctrine of Negation* will be published this year by the Harvard University Press.

J. Masson, an American, studied Sanskrit under Daniel H. H. Ingalls at Harvard from where he received a fellowship to the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris to study Sanskrit poetics with L. Renou. He has come to India as a Fulbright scholar, and is preparing a translation of the *Dhvanyāloka*.

P. Lal is a lecturer in English Literature at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, and the author of *Great Sanskrit Plays in Modern Translation*, New Directions, 1964. He is currently engaged on a translation of selections from the *Mahābhārata*.

David McCutcheon, from England, is a Reader in Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University. He is keenly interested in Indian art and archaeology, and is now engaged on a study of the terracotta-decorated temples of Bengal.

ila Ray is an American by birth and an Indian by choice. Wife of the Bengali novelist and litterateur Annadasankar Ray, she is a well-known translator from Bengali. She was an Indian delegate to the Rome Conference on translation in 1964.

Naresh Guha as the Director conducted in December 1965, the three-day seminar at Jadavpur in honour of the birth centenary of W. B. Yeats.

Narendranath Bhattacharya was another teacher of this department. See obituary.

Amiya Dev teaches Comparative Literature at Jadavpur. Currently he is in the United States on a Fulbright Grant working for his Ph.D. at Indiana University. He belongs to the first batch of Indian students who ever took courses in Comparative Literature.